

THE

4034 h. 56.

A P O L O G Y

OF

BENJAMIN BEN MORDECAI

TO HIS FRIENDS,

FOR EMBRACING CHRISTIANITY,

IN SEVERAL LETTERS

TO *ELISHA LEVI*, Merchant, of *Amsterdam*.

---

LETTERS V, VI, and VII.

---

*by Henry Taylor*



---

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. WILKIE, at N<sup>o</sup> 71, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

M.DCC.LXXIV.



APOLLO  
CONTEST  
BENJAMIN BERNARD

TO HIS MOTHER

FOR EMERGENCY

IN SEVERAL LETTERS

TO HIS MOTHER



LETTERS

LONDON

Printed by J. W. Smith, 10, St. Paul's Churchyard, London

MILCOLETTA



# C O N T E N T S

## O F T H E

### F I F T H L E T T E R.

<b>T</b> H R E E <i>Criteria</i> explained, by which the Truth of <i>Christianity</i> is to be examined	Page 1
1st, The Nature of <i>Man</i>	2
2. The Nature and Attributes of <i>God</i> : and first of the divine <i>Justice</i>	4
Of the divine <i>Goodness</i> , as distinct from his <i>Justice</i>	5
Of Providence by free Volition, and moral Laws	6
<i>Right</i> and <i>Wrong</i> not dependent on the Will of <i>God</i>	8
Other particulars of <i>God's</i> Providence, relative to the Hap- piness of his Creatures; in order to promote the Cause of Righteousness	9
<i>God</i> expects Men to promote one another's happiness	10
3. The Scripture account of the <i>Fall</i>	11
Whether the History of the <i>Fall</i> be literal or allegorical	12
The Breath of Life, or the Soul, immaterial, &c.	13
Eternal Life depended on the Behaviour of <i>Adam</i>	14
Death introduced by <i>Sin</i>	15
The Scriptures say nothing of <i>Adam's</i> natural Immortality	16
But his Life was preserved providentially—Two similar cases in Scripture	17
What the <i>Death</i> was, which was threaten'd	18
Not eternal Death	19
Nor was his final Judgement denounced by the penalty threaten'd	20



Reasonable from the continuance of his Race to expect a future State	Page 18
The human Faculties not depraved by the <i>Fall</i>	19
The appointment of a <i>Mediator</i> , nor consequence of the <i>Fall</i>	20
The <i>Guilt</i> of <i>Adam's</i> Sin did not descend upon his Posterity; nor the <i>Punishment</i>	21
Mr. <i>Chubb's</i> reasoning on this subject considered	21
The Posterity of <i>Adam</i> deprived of no <i>Right</i> — Death was a <i>Benefit</i> to them	22
The State of <i>Adam</i> after his Transgression, and the ground of his future Hopes	23
How God hath acted in similar Circumstances.	24
And upon what Principles the Redemption from Death may be founded	25
<i>Grotius</i> , <i>Stillingfleet</i> , &c. seem to found Redemption on a wrong Principle: viz. that God cannot forgive Sin, without the Sufferings of some one by way of Satisfaction	26
Mr. <i>Theophilus Gale's</i> opinion; and Dr. <i>Samuel Clarke's</i> :	27
Their opinions examined	28
The opinions of <i>Auſtine</i> and <i>Anſelm</i>	31
The Objection of the <i>Deists</i> considered; that God cannot forgive sins, for the sake of a <i>Mediator</i>	32
Mr. <i>Chubb's</i> reasoning considered	33
The Scripture sense of the phrase ( <i>for the sake of</i> )	34
How we are saved at the <i>Intercession</i> of <i>Christ</i>	37
Prayer, considered under three Circumstances	
1st, With regard to Events, unfixed and undetermined by God	39
2. With regard to Events, determined contrary to our Prayers	41
3. With regard to such Events, as are agreeable to the Will of God; though not determined absolutely	42
The <i>Manner</i> of conferring a Benefit, sometimes as necessary as the Benefit itself	42
Mr. <i>Chubb</i> mistakes the Case	43
A parallel Case, to explain the question	44
How	



# L E T T E R V.

v

How far the <i>Christian</i> and <i>Deist</i> are agreed, upon the question rightly stated	Page 45
Salvation extends only to <i>Penitents</i>	46
And is conferred in the most proper <i>Manner</i> —and no one is either punished or rewarded, contrary to <i>Rectitude</i>	47
The divine Benevolence; according to the <i>Christian</i> scheme, greatly superior to that of the <i>Deists</i> ; and more fitly adapted to promote the Cause of Righteousness	48

## ERRATA in LETTERS IV. V. VI.

LETTER IV. PAGE 127, line 24, for *opine*, read *move*; l. 27 for *significā*, read *significā*.—P. 128, Note (m), l. 4, dele *the marks of a parenthesis*.—P. 131, Note, l. 6, for *fighing*, read *fighing*; and in l. 11 from the bottom, read *Kord*.—P. 134, l. 14, after *saigor* insert *insior*.—P. 135, prefix the letters of reference *b, c, d*, to the texts.—P. 145, l. 11, after *prove*, add, *that the Messiah is not come; by such reasons, as will equally prove*.—P. 151, Note (m), l. 1, read *multi*.—P. 159, l. 17, put 2. before the paragraph.—P. 164, l. 7, read *demonstrate*.—P. 171, l. 7, put 3. before the paragraph.—P. 178, l. 5, read *Repentance*.—P. 184, l. 23, read *any notice of*;

LETTER V. PAGE 5, l. 17, read *be better*.—P. 7, l. penult. after p. 379, add *Court of the Gentiles; pt. IV. bk. ii. ch. 5, § 3. p. 350*.—P. 10, l. 11, read *that even*.—P. 19, l. 11, at the end of the paragraph, put *"*.—P. 26, l. 5, read *Parent*.—P. 27, l. penult. read *Stilling fleet*.—P. 30, l. 3, for [God], read *God*.—P. 34, l. 27, for *any of*, read *of any*.—P. 41, l. 32, for *shall*, read *shalt*.—P. 42, l. 24, read *by means of them*.—P. 44, l. 7, read *petition for*.

LETTER VI. PAGE 50, l. penult. read *has it done*.

L E T T E R



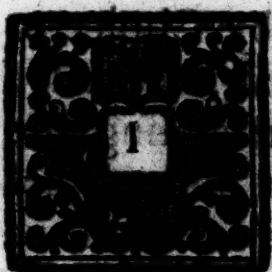




## LETTER THE FIFTH.

It has always been my desire, to see Religion treated as a *rational* thing; free from all Absurdity and Folly.—The Religion of *Nature* is capable of the strictest Evidence; and therefore *that* is never to be deviated from, or given-up. The Religion of *Christ*, as it lies in the *new Testament*, is perfectly agreeable-to, and consistent-with, what *natural* Religion teacheth; and so it will be always found by them, that examine into its Truth with sincerity.

Pref. to the second Edition of Dr. Sykes' Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion.



HAVE shewn, in my last Letter; that, according to our own Prophecies, the *Messiah* ought to have come before the destruction of the Temple and City of *Jerusalem*: and that the Prophecies of Him have been fulfilled, in the person of *Jesus Christ*; who answers in every respect to the prophetic character of the *Messiah*; and can be no other, if *our* Prophecies be true.

And therefore, when I was beginning this Letter, I proposed to enter immediately upon considering the mediatorial Scheme of Salvation by Him; and, as I went along, to take Notice of all the Objections to it, which appeared to be of any considerable moment: and to explaine the System of Christianity, consistently with the *old Testament*, the Attributes of *God*, and the Nature of *Man*. For I knew, by Experience; that, whatever might be the *external* evidence of Christianity; yet, if it's *Doctrines* did not appear consistent with *these*, neither *Jew* nor *Deist* would stay to examine it: but would argue against it *a priori*, that such a Revelation could not possibly be *divine*; even though it should appear to be confirmed by Miracles. But, when I began to consider my subject with this view; I found it necessary, before I could procede, to lay

\* See Letter IV. p. 185. note.



down a clear and distinct Notion of those very Principles and *Criteria*, by which the Truth of the Christian Religion is to be examined; and to make it the buisness of the present Letter to consider the Nature of *Man*, the Attributes of *God*, and the method of his moral Government over Mankind, as far as this subject is concerned; and to clear the Scripture doctrines of the *Fall*, and a *mediatorial Redemption*, from some of the false representations of its Friends and Enemies.

To this purpose, in the first place, I shall consider the Nature of *Man*: because, if a Revelation be *divine*, it must be agreable to the Nature of those Beings; to whom it is reveled. Almighty God hath given to his Creatures their particular Natures and Qualities; that they may be able to serve those Ends and Uses, for which he made them: and consequently, he will govern them according to those Natures and Qualities; for a Being of infinite Wisdom will always be consistent, through the whole Course of his Providence: He will not require Vegetables to act by Choice or Volition; nor the Brutes to live by the Laws of moral Rectitude; nor one Man to govern himself by an other's Understanding and Conscience: But he will require of every intelligent Being, according to the Capacity he has given him; and, as far as he is capable of knowing how he ought to act, so far, and no farther, his Duty will extend; for no Person can be under a moral Obligation to do, what his Understanding is not able to inform him that he ought to do; after he has taken all the pains he can, either by himself or others, to know his Duty: but his moral Obligation will always be inseparable from, and commensurate to, the perception of Rectitude; for to see an action to be *right*, is the same thing as to see that it *ought* to be performed. The Understanding therefore is to every man, after he has taken all the pains he is able for Information, the Boundary of his Duty: and Conscience is nothing else but the reflex act of the Understanding upon the rectitude or obliquity of our Conduct. From hence it follows; that Obedience to the Understanding, in all moral Concerns, is *Virtue*; and Opposition to it is *Vice*: an intelligent Being can deserve Praise or Reward, no farther than as he acts agreably to his intelligent Nature; nor Dispraise or Punishment, any farther than as he acts in opposition to it: and this is universally true; under all advantages or disadvantages whatsoever.

*Format*



*Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem  
Fortunarum habitum—*

The case is just the same, under the benefit of a Revelation; and under the dictates of unassisted Reason.

From hence it follows; that, if, upon a strict and impartial Examination into the Evidence in proof of a Revelation from God, our Understanding is not convinced; there can be no *merit* in believing it: for the *merit* of believing consists in opening our hearts to Evidence, and then determining as our Understanding directs. In like manner, if our Understanding, after the best Enquiry, is not able to direct us; what Revelation comes from God, and what does not; there can be no more *merit*, in receiving a *true* Revelation; than a *false* one: it depends entirely upon Chance: and if in such a situation we should reject the Truth, and espouse the Error; it would not be our Fault, but our Misfortune; and we should deserve the Pity and Compassion, but by no means the Resentment, of those; who should be acquainted with the importance of the Truths we had rejected, and the ill consequences of the Errors we had espoused. But to apply Force and Violence, or any other Means in such cases, except Evidence and Reason, to convince the Understanding; is as inconsistent with the Nature of Man; as it is absurd and ridiculous, to think of forming Axioms out of Halts; or Syllogisms out of Chains and Gibbets.

The only way to convince the Understanding must be, to enlighten it with more abundant Evidence; or to shew the thing in a different light. By these means innumerable Truths, which are unattainable by mere Reason, and yet of very great Importance to our well-being; may be discovered to us by Revelation: for nothing can be proved, by the mere light of Reason; but what necessarily follows from the very Nature of things, and could not have been otherwise. Probable Conjectures may be made, from what God hath done; to what he may or will do, in such circumstances as seem to us to be of a like nature; but we can come to no Certainty, except where we can prove it contrary to the divine Attributes to act otherwise: for every thing, that depends upon the mere Will and Bounty of God, and the particular Time and Manner in which his Blessings are dispensed, can only be known by Revelation. And this Revelation must be consistent in every particular with the Nature and Reason of Man, wherever it relates to



his moral Conduct; or else he would be obliged to act by two opposite and inconsistent Laws: which is an Absurdity to suppose.

Having said thus much concerning the Nature of *Man*; I shall proceed to explain, as far is necessary to the present purpose, the Nature and Attributes of *God*. For, as nothing can become our Duty, which it is contrary to the Nature of *Man* to perform; so neither can any thing become our Duty, which is contrary to the Nature and Attributes of *God* to require.

Now the *moral* Attributes of *God*, which are chiefly to be considered upon this Subject, are those of Justice and Goodness; upon which I shall observe as follows—

1. The Justice or Righteousness of *God* may be considered either positively, or negatively. The *positive* Justice of *God* consists, in giving to his Creatures as much Good; as they have any claim of Right to *expect*: and, if they have no claim of Right, his positive Justice is entirely out of the Question. The *negative* Justice of *God* consists, in not extending the Punishment of his Creatures beyond their Guilt: that is, beyond what they have *deserved*.

I do not think it at all necessary here to enter into the question; whether there be any immediate Connection in *nature* between Virtue and Reward, Vice and Punishment: Perhaps, there may not: But, when we consider *God* as the *moral* Governor of the Universe, it seems to follow of necessity; that He will encourage Virtue, and discourage Vice; by the dispensation of natural good and evil in such proportion, as to bring about the end in view: for he promotes *Virtue*, by forming a Connection between moral and natural *Good*; and he deterrs from *Vice*, by forming a Connection between moral and natural *Evil*: and, when this is done in a *judicial* way, we say that *God* rewards good actions; and punishes the bad. And thus Virtue will be connected with Reward, and Vice with Punishment, by the introduction of a third link in the Chain; viz. the Ends of divine Government.

As to cases of mere Bounty and Favour; where more is given than hath been merited, or (if all Merit be excluded, by the perverseness of our actions;) wherever the deserved Punishment is forgiven, in whole or in part; the Justice of *God* is not all concerned. For it is no Injustice, to dispense Favours; where there is no prior Merit, or just Claim; as in Creation: or, where Punishment or Satisfaction might justly be required; as in Forgiveness. And therefore,



therefore, in all such cases, God may withhold his Favours; or grant them, on what Terms he pleases; or *ἀνεκόν* that is, without any Terms or Conditions at all: as best serves the ends of his Government in promoting Virtue and Happiness.

There is, says Dr. *Whichcote*, a *Just*, which of Right *may* be done; and there is a *Just*, which of Right *must* be done<sup>b</sup>: [or, as Mr. *Emlyn* expresses it, *quod fieri potest*; and *quod fieri debet*<sup>c</sup>.] The rule or law of Righteousness *requires* that to be done, which justly *ought* to be done; but it doth not *require* every thing to be done, which justly *may* be done. Or, in other Words, Justice consists in giving every one what is *due* to him; but not in exacting all that is *due* from him: every Being having a Power and Right, to give freely what is his *own*; or to forgive what is his *due*, without Injustice. Otherwise, Justice would be inconsistent with Mercy and Bounty. And we do not find any attribute of God in the Scripture, which necessitates him to punish; wherever the Ends of his Government can be better served by Mercy, Bounty, and Forgiveness.

2. The *Goodness* of God, considered as distinct from his *Justice*, consists either in conferring *unmerited* Happiness; (that is, where there is no prior proportionable merit in the person on whom it is conferred;) or in lessening or forgiving the Punishment, which might *justly* be inflicted.

But here again it must be observed; that, as *Justice* does not require every Punishment to be inflicted, which *may* be inflicted consistently with Justice; but the ends of divine government are always considered: So neither does *Goodness* require every Blessing to be conferred upon the Individuals, which may be consistent with Goodness. But even the Goodness or Bounty of God is carried-on for the good of the Whole; and must be frequently restrained by the ends of Government to promote the Virtue and Happiness of the *Whole*; with which many Evils among the Individuals may not only be consistent, but very necessary to promote them.

The Opinion of the *Christians*, with regard to the Providence of God and the general Laws of his Government over all, is entirely agreeable to our own Scriptures. *They* believe, with *Us*; that no Man hath *seen* God at any time, nor *heard* his voice<sup>d</sup>; and conse-

<sup>b</sup> *Aphorisms*, 490. 701.

<sup>c</sup> *Joh. i. 18.*—*1 Tim. vi. 16.*

<sup>d</sup> This he farther explains; *Tracts*, vol. i. p. 241.

quently,



quently, that God hath never appeared in Person to any of the Sons of Men; but always by his Angel or Messenger: as when he is said to have appeared to *Aaron*, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and the seventy Elders of *Israel*\*. And they believe, that every the minutest particle of Matter is known to Him; and the very Hairs of our Head numbered†: that the smallest Animal is the object of his Care and Providence and Benevolence; and every individual Person through the infinity of Space, to whom he has given Understanding to govern himself; and every Parent in the Government of his Family, and every Magistrate in the Government of Society, and every King and Potentate in the Government of States and Empires, and Angels in the Government of Worlds or Systems of Worlds, or whatever Beings are superior to Angels; are all subject to his Superintendence; their Thoughts, as well as their Conduct, the Objects of his Knowledge and his Care; and all of them accountable to him for their Actions: and that he is always present to every part of his Government, and orders or executes what is best and wisest for the benefit and perfection of the whole; suffering in the mean time all the Weakness, Error and Folly, (which must unavoidably happen among imperfect Beings, in proportion to their imperfection;) as far as is fit and right to do; and rectifying them in his own time and manner, or teaching them how to rectify them themselves, as he sees to be most agreeable to Wisdom; and most proper to promote Virtue and Righteousness. For God does not govern the World by unintelligent Power; or by absolute Necessity, or Fate, or arbitrary Will; but by free and unconstrained Volition, and by moral Laws; and the End and Design of his Government is to extend moral Perfection and Happiness through the Universe. His *Existence* and his *natural* Attributes are necessary; and must therefore be always the same, in every respect and in all places; but his *Actions* are free and voluntary: He can begin and continue and determine them to what Time, Place, and Degree he pleases. “He made the World, not from any Necessity determining him; but when he thought proper. Matter is not necessary; but he created as much of it, as he thought proper; he placed the System of the fixed Stars at various distances from each other, at his Pleasure. In the solar system he formed the Planets of such a num-

\* *Ex.* xxiv. 10. See Letter II. p. 1.

† *Matt.* x. 30.



ber, and disposed them at such various distances from the Sun, as he pleased. He made them all move from West to East; though it is evident from the motion of Comets, that he might have made them move from East to West. In these and other instances we plainly perceive the vestiges of a *wise* agent; but acting *freely* and with perfect Liberty &c." And herein consists his Goodness; that though he has all Power, which nothing can resist; yet he constantly chooses, without any possibility of Restraint upon him, to do that which is most just and good; and tends to the moral Perfection and happiness of his Creatures.

As to the moral Attribute of Justice; Mr. *Theophilus Gale* has given us this strange account of it. "*Man*, says he, *wills* things; "because they are *just*: but things are therefore *just* with *God*, because he *wills* them." But is it possible; that the same Action, and under the same Circumstances, should be just, when performed by *one* Being; and unjust, when performed by *an other*? May it not as safely be said; that a proposition may be *true*, when asserted by *one* Being; and *false*, when asserted by *an other*? This was not the opinion of our Father *Abraham*; when he drew near to God, and said; "Wilt thou also destroy the Righteous with the Wicked?—That be far from Thee, to do after this manner; to slay the Righteous with the Wicked, and that the Righteous should be as the Wicked; that be far from Thee: Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do *Right*?" Our Father here spake what was true, and worthy of the supreme God; and thereby obtained that glorious Title; which *Plato* has also given to the *Religious* man; who, he saith, is the *Friend* of God; in opposition to the *Superstitious* Man; who is his *Flatterer*. The Christian Religion does not oblige us to speak *wickedly* for God, nor to talk *deceitfully* for him<sup>k</sup>; but is equally an enemy to Superstition, as our own: Nor does it suffer us, therefore, to exalt his absolute Will and Power at the expense of his moral Character; as if it depended wholly on his

<sup>g</sup> *Maclaurin's* account of Sir *J. Newton's* Philosophical Discoveries; p. 383. Neither are they to be commended; who, under the pretence of magnifying the essential power of the supreme Cause, make Truth and Falshood depend on his *Will*. Such tenets have a direct tendency to introduce the absurd Opinion, that intellectual Faculties may be so made; as clearly and distinctly to perceive that to be *true*, which is really *false*. p. 379.

<sup>h</sup> *Gen.* xviii. 23, &c.

<sup>i</sup> *James* ii. 23.

<sup>k</sup> *Job.* xiii. 7.



Will, that Virtue is preferable to Vice; and not upon its own intrinsic Nature. But it teaches, what is true in fact; that Rectitude is unchangeable, independent, and eternal; and no more the subject of Power or Will, than necessary Existence—Men may flatter Tyrants; by telling them, that They can change the nature of Things; and make right to be wrong, and wrong to be right, at their Command: But, while they think to exalt them by such speeches, they in reality deprive them of every moral Excellence; and debase them below the common state of Man. For, if Right and Wrong depend on mere Will and Power; there can be no such thing as Goodness, or Justice, or moral Excellence of any kind, even in God himself: because, if he had acted the very reverse to what he always has done; (which may very justly be supposed, if it had been in its own Nature equally right:) his Actions, according to *this* notion, would have been equally just and good and praiseworthy; as they now are. But Christianity does not, by a false Complement to absolute Power, confess what is not true; that God would be equally the object of our Adoration, as he now is; (merely upon account of his absolute Dominion;) if he were cruel, unjust and false: but, with a rational and manly worship, adores and praises him; because he chooses to be merciful, and just, and true. But he could not be merciful, nor just, nor true, in annexing Damnation to the vicious Actions of his Creatures; if Virtue and Vice depended on mere arbitrary Will; and the Vice which he condemns was in its Nature equally meritorious with the Virtue which he rewards. On the contrary; it would be the greatest Cruelty, to form Laws of right and wrong; by which a great number of his Creatures would fall short of Happiness: when, if things were left to themselves to continue as they were, no one could be condemned at all. If, before a Law, Actions were all indifferent; how cruel must it be, to make such a Law as would condemn a great part of the Creation; by calling or declaring one thing to be good, and an other to be evil; one just, and an other unjust; when in Truth and Nature there was no Difference, but one thing was as good and as just as the other! As such an arbitrary Determination would be contrary to the Mercy and Justice of God; so would it be also to his Wisdom and Knowledge. To consider one thing to be good, and an other to be evil; when he knew them to be indifferent, in themselves, and in their consequence; would be contrary to God's Knowledge: and to declare them to be  
so



to, would be contrary to Truth: and to prefer the one to the other, in so extraordinary a manner; if there were no difference in their Natures, upon which to found such preference; would be contrary to Wisdom. For arbitrary Will, as it makes no difference or alteration in the things themselves, can be no ground or reason of preference to an intelligent Being.

But, in truth, God does not make one thing right, and another wrong; one thing morally good, and another thing morally evil; but only reveals to us their several Natures; and he does not do this, in order to manifest his *Power*; but his *Love*. He deters us from Vice; because, in its very Nature, it is destructive to rational and natural Happiness: and he allures us to Righteousness, because it preserves every thing in its proper State, every Being in its proper Rights, and promotes Regularity and Order and Harmony between the separate Interests of the several Individuals through the Universe; and thereby the true Interest and Happiness of the whole.

To explain some other particulars in the method of God's Government, it will be necessary to observe; that the Happiness of all intelligent Beings is of two Sorts: one of which consists in the *outward* Circumstances, in which they are placed; and the other in the *inward* Satisfaction and Enjoyment of their Consciences: and these two must unite in the same Person; to render his Happiness complete. Now the Benefits we receive from God, such as Knowledge and Understanding, and every perfection of Mind and Body; and all the motives to Rectitude and Virtue which we find in the human Breast, and the capacity of Improvement in happiness, are innumerable; and are all conferred upon us *δωρεάν*, by the free gift of God, as an all-powerful and benevolent Creator and Benefactor; without any merit of our own. And he confers these blessings upon us; to enable us, by the right use of them, to attain to Virtue and Righteousness; and thereby gain that inward conscious Happiness, which arises solely and entirely from the approbation of our own Conduct: and is incapable of being derived in any other manner: It must be a man's own Acquisition; or it cannot exist at all. And God, who designs the rational and virtuous part of the creation to enjoy all kind of rational Happiness; hath placed them in such Circumstances, as to put this kind of Happiness within their own power; and then, as a moral Governor and Judge, showers  
C down



down upon them still greater perfections, and higher degrees of good, in reward of their moral improvement. And thus his Providence is directed to promote both the natural and moral perfection of his Creatures, wherëever it can be done in that way, by bestowing his blessings in a judicial manner, as the rewards of Virtue: And from hence it comes to pass; that, though Almighty God is always *willing* to bestow his blessings as a *bountiful Benefactor*, upon his Creatures; yet, as the *Patron of Virtue*, he frequently withholds them; till he can bestow them *judicially*: as the rewards of personal Merit, and encouragements to Virtue and Righteousness. And for this Reason it seems that *ven Christ* himself, our great Exemplar, was not exalted to his great power in an arbitrary manner, as a *free Gift*; but by a *judicial* act of Reward, after he had merited it by extraordinary acts of Humiliation and Obedience; whereby the glory of his exaltation received a double Lustre, and doubly served the cause of Righteousness. This seems also to be the reason, why God commanded *Abimelech* to desire *Abraham* to pray for him; saying, he is a Prophet; and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live<sup>1</sup>. And so again God orders the Friends of *Job* to offer up a burn'd offering, and "my Servant *Job* shall pray for you; for Him "will I accept<sup>2</sup>." Here it is plain, that God was willing to forgive; but would have it done in such a manner, as to promote Virtue and Piety; by accepting the prayers of those, who were holy. And the chief meaning of Sacrifices seems to be of the same Nature; that, by such a voluntary Gift to God, Men might make their first advances towards Him, in a publick manner; and appear to receive the blessings they prayed for, as a reward of their pious behaviour.

There is an *other* Circumstance in the administration of Providence, which seems to be a Consequence of this; and is no less worthy our Observation: viz. Though Almighty God is desirous that the distresses of Men should be alleviated; (as appears manifestly, from the commands he has given them to assist and befriend one another;) yet he frequently suffers them to continue under their Afflictions, if they be not actually relieved by the benevolence of their fellow-creatures: Which seems to shew; that, when God hath enabled Men to assist one another, and given them opportuni-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. x.<sup>2</sup> Job. xlii. 8.



ties of doing it, and a consciousness that it is their Duty: he expects, the whole race of Man should carry on this purpose; without his immediate interposition. "The divine Scheme, says Mr. Richard Price, is plainly this; that Events shall, in a certain degree, be; what created Agents make them. God's Will, in numberless Cases, appears to be; that one Being shall, or shall not, receive particular Benefits, or suffer particular Evils; as his fellow Beings shall please to determine." And Experience shews this Observation to be just, in a thousand instances. And if, by the good behaviour of any one of the human race, in assisting his fellow-creatures, he can gain for them, or enable them to gain for themselves, those Rewards, which the moral Governor of the Universe hath appropriated to virtuous actions; and by his Labour or Sufferings in the cause, elicit *moral* Good from *natural* Evil; the gain must be immense\*. And he that is so wise and benevolent, as to act in this manner; is worthy of the highest Reward and Praise. And as this is a most reasonable Requisition from all Men to one another, as being all fellow-creatures; so it also seems to point-out a Reason, why the Son of God should take our Nature upon him; and why our Salvation should be brought about by one of our own race†.

Having now considered the nature of *Man*, and the attributes of *God*, and the method of his moral Government over Mankind, as far as is necessary to my present purpose; I will proceed to explain, what seems to be the Scripture Doctrine concerning the *Fall* of *Man*, and his Recovery from the ill effects of it by a *Mediatorial Redemption*; and clear it from the Additions and Misrepresentations both of the Christians and their Adversaries: that the third *Criterion*, by which the Truth of Christianity is to be examined *a priori*, may be plain and intelligible.

When (*Elohim*) God created the World, and filled it with Animals of every kind, and Food that was proper for them; God said, let us make *Man* in our Image, after our Likeness; (*Gen. i. 26*; that is, a moral Governor over the World below them:) and let them have Dominion over the fish of the Sea, and over the fowl of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth. (*ver. 28.*)

\* Price on Providence, p. 97.

† Rom. viii. 18.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 21. Heb. ii. 14. &c.



And accordingly God formed Man of the dust of the Ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life; and Man became a living Soul. Ch. ii. 7. And the Lord commanded the Man, saying; of every Tree of the Garden thou mayst freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Ch. ii. 17.

Various have been the disputes among the Learned; whether this History be literal, or allegorical: but I think, it is not of much concern; with regard to our Conduct in life, and our future Happiness: for the Doctrine conveyed by it, is much the same; in either case.

If it was a literal Restriction from one Tree; it inculcated upon our first parents the duty of Sobriety, in making their Appetite obedient to Reason and Religion; and imprinted on their minds a sense of God, as the great Proprietor of all things; and that they had no Right to this Tree, because He had not given it them: and, by parity of reason, this Precept would extend to generals; and then the sense of the words would include their duty to God, their Neighbour, and Themselves; Sobriety, Justice and Piety: if the account be symbolical, it must be intended to signify the same duties under a Figure; and in either sense, it was a command of the utmost Consequence to be complied with: as it gave to Man an opportunity of gaining Immortality, by his Obedience to very easy Conditions. And, indeed

Whatever be the Nature of this Breath of Life, which we call the Soul, and the Heathens considered in the same Light as *Moses* does, to be *divina particula aura*; and which *Sir Isaac Newton* expresses by the words *Persona Hominis, seu Principium cogitans*; (*Schol. gen.*) it seems, according to *St. Paul*, *I Cor. xv. 44.* to be neither an animal Body, nor a spiritual Body; but something different from both. For the Apostle considers animal and spiritual Body to be merely its Vehicles; with the one of which we are now clothed, and with the other we shall be clothed hereafter: And, if the Soul be neither of these; I should conclude, that it is not Body of any kind; but immaterial, impenetrable, destitute of the *Vis Inertiae*, and all the particular properties of Matter; and a Self-mover.—To confirm this opinion, it may be farther argued; that, when *Christ* was to be born into this world, he descended from Heaven; and took upon him, or clothed himself with, the Body which was prepared for him in the womb of the Virgin *Mary*; and he consisted of two Principles: The one of which was Flesh, or Body, and material; the other Spirit, which descended from Heaven, and was immaterial. Now if by this he became a Man; then Man must also consist of the same two Principles, the one material and the other immaterial; as He did.—On the contrary, if Body and Spirit be the same thing; if, *Persona Hominis seu Principium cogitans* be Body, or Matter; it seems to follow, that the Atoms of *Epicurus* might be endued with Volition, and direct themselves in strait lines, or in curves, or obliquely, or at what angles they pleased; and form a World, as they should think most proper; without any assistance from without. *Declinare etiam motus, nec tempore certa Nec regione loci certa; sed ubi ipsi tulit Mens*: which is absurd and atheistical. *Lucr. ii. 260.*

the



the more trifling the light is, in which the Command is represented, by those who object to it upon that account; (though most Men sin by the same kind of Temptation, in preferring their Appetite to their Reason, or the animal to the spiritual Nature;) the more easy must the Condition appear to be, upon which Immortality was offered; and the more heinous the Sin, in disobeying a Divine Command of such infinite Consequence; upon a Temptation, which they represent to be so slight and trifling.

Thus Man became an intelligent moral agent, capable of Good and Evil, and accountable to his Creator in the Government of himself and the Creatures under his Dominion.

After God of his own grace and favour had given Life to Man; he made the bountiful gift more acceptable, by adding a Certainty of continuing it, as long as Man should continue obedient to the Law of Rectitude, which he had given them; and thus eternal Life depended upon their own behaviour.

This appears to be the obvious sense of the Prohibition; "*In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*;" which naturally implies,

It is not improbable; that this Prohibition gave the first Rudiments of the *cerimonial*, as well as of the *moral* Law. For when God preserved one Tree as his own Property, whether in a symbolical or literal sense, to shew himself the great Proprietor and Lord of all; nothing could be more natural, than for *Adam* and his Posterity to begin their Worship by an acknowledgement of the same Truth; and upon any extraordinary Occasion, (as when they gathered in the fruits of the Earth, or any other time of great joy and thankfulness, and so at length at stated times and seasons) to make a voluntary offering and gift to God of a part of their good things; by way of external confession and symbolical acknowledgement, that he was the great Proprietor from whom they received them; and to offer them in such a manner, that they might be entirely alienated from themselves and from every other man, and thereby appropriated to God; as by burning the Solids in the Fire, or casting them into the Sea; and spilling the Liquids upon the Ground: and so at length different Forms and Cerimonies might arise, appropriated to different Occasions; some, when they offered thanksgiving; others, when they begged forgiveness; others, when they craved blessings, or made confession of their sins: and all these might afterwards be reduced into one regular system, which formed the *cerimonial* Law given to *Moses*. For all agree; there is no express assertion in the sacred Writings, that this mode of Religious Worship was instituted by God (at the beginning); and no other Notion seems with so much probability to account for its being in use so very early, among the sacred Rites of almost all the Nations of the World; as this does.

Gen. 17.—The word *Day* in Scripture language is used sometimes for a very long time. The Day of Temptation in the Wilderness was 40 years. *Pf.* xcv. 7. *Heb.* iii. 7. The Prophets use the Word *Day* for the 70 years Captivity. The Day of the great Judgement so much celebrated among the Jews in all their Writings, and from them taken up by *Christ* and his Apostles, contains the whole *Millennium*, or 1000 years. So 1000 years in the sight of God are but as yesterday; *Pf.* xc. 4. and Eternity is called a *Day*, by *St. Peter*; *II.* iii. 18. And thus the Penalty on *Adam* might



plies, what all such prohibitions do; that, if the Law was not broken, the Penalty should not be inflicted. This Interpretation is confirmed by the book of *Wisdom*, supposed to be written by our *Philos*; "God made not Death—but ungodly Men with their Works and Words called it to them:" and by *Elisha*; who says, unto Him (that is, *Adam*) thou gavest commandment to love thy ways; which He transgressed: and immediately thou appointedst Death in him and in his generations". And it is so explained by the Apostles; who tell us, that Death entered into the world by Sin—and Sin brought forth Death—and the wages of Sin is Death: the consequence of which must be, as Dr. Sykes observes; that, if there were no Sin, there would be no such Wages paid. And indeed this Law, that those who will not obey the command of their Creator, shall forfeit all the benefit they have received from him, appears so extremely just; that one would rather imagine it to be the general Law of Nature, relative to all moral Beings in the Universe; than any particular Law, which only regarded our first Parents: and that it was not then newly constituted, but only then declared and announced to Them.

The plane state of the case, according to the Scripture, seems to be this; that, when it pleased God to create a Race of Beings between the Brutes and the Angels; in whom the two Natures should be joined, by the addition of moral Perception to the animal; he gave it into their power either to indulge the *animal* Nature, and forfeit the hope of eternal Life; or, by cultivating the angelic faculties and improving the *moral* character, to become fit and meet to be partakers of Immortality; and admitted into the rank of Angels. For this seems to be the sense of St. Paul; in several parts of his writings: He tells us, "He that soweth to his *Flesh*, (that is, He that labours to indulge the *animal* part of his Nature) shall of the flesh reap Corruption; but He that soweth to the *Spirit*, (that is, He that labours to benefit the intelligent, *moral*, or angelic part of his Nature) shall of the *spirit* reap life everlasting". So again; if ye live after the *flesh*, ye shall die; but if ye through the *spirit* do mortify the

might have been literally fulfilled; for he lived 930 years. Or, the word *Day* may mean an indefinite number of years: or, the words may mean not an actual Death; but a subjection to Death, by withdrawing the particular providence, by which he was preserved. See *Meth*, p. 96. 666.

172.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. i. 13. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. iii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. vi. 8.



deeds of the *body*, ye shall live <sup>1</sup>. And accordingly, the Christian Scriptures assure us; that *Christ* has given us power, to become the *sons of God*<sup>2</sup>; to quit entirely the animal Nature, and become equal to the Angels, the Children of the Resurrection; who can die no more<sup>3</sup>. And St. *Peter* expresses this whole Doctrine; telling us, that exceeding great and precious promises were given unto us; "that we might be partakers of the divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption that is in the world through lust"<sup>4</sup>.

I do not see, it is at all necessary here to enter into the Question; whether Man was created immortal, and Sin produced Mortality; and *Christ* restores that Immortality, which *Adam* lost: or whether *Adam* was created mortal; and *Christ* confers upon us an Immortality, which *Adam* failed of gaining by not performing the Conditions upon which it was offered him.—It is sufficient for the Explanation of the *Christian* scheme, to observe; that God promised Life to *Adam*, upon his Obedience: and consequently, whether he was at first naturally immortal or not; he could not cease to live, while he continued obedient; and on the other hand, whether he was naturally immortal or not; he would certainly die, if he was disobedient; and in either case, it may be said; that Death entered into the world by Sin, and that by Man came Death; whether it was a positive infliction of Punishment, or merely the consequence of withdrawing the particular Providence by which he was preserved.

However, it is certain; that the Scriptures never give us the least hint of *Adam's* natural Immortality: but through the whole History consider his Existence to be dependent on the Tree of Life. For, when *Adam* was driven out of Paradise, we are told; that Angels were placed at the East of the garden of *Eden*, to keep the way of the tree of Life; lest he should put forth his hand, and eat, and live for ever<sup>5</sup>. From whence it appears in a literal sense; that, though Immortality was within his reach; yet he was not then possessed of it. And the same Idea is continued in the Revelation of St. *John*; where we are told, that the leaves of the Tree of Life were for the healing of the Nations<sup>6</sup>: which notion of it answers in the literal sense to a continued Providence in successive subministration of help and assistance and remedy against all misfortunes and accidents.

<sup>1</sup> Ro. iii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Luk. xx. 36.

<sup>3</sup> John i. 12.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. i. 4.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Gen. viii. 2. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. xxii. 2.

And



And this Interpretation is confirmed by two similar Instances in the Scripture; one in the *Old*, and the other in the *New Testament*: the first is in the History of *Hezekiah*<sup>e</sup>; whose State was in this particular, for some years, the same as *Adam*'s seems to have been. It was declared to him by God; that he would add unto his days Fifteen years: And a similar instance we meet in the new Testament; where it was revealed to *Simeon*<sup>f</sup>, by the Holy Ghost; that he should not see Death, before he had seen the Lord's *Christ*. Now the Lives of these were as sure and certain, till the time appointed by the promise of God; as if they had been naturally immortal: and yet not by any alteration in the metaphysical nature of the Soul, but by a particular Providence. For, whenever God determines absolutely the End, he himself will provide the Means to bring it about.

With regard to the Nature of the *Death*, which was here threatened; some Christians have fallen into very erroneous notions; and thereby given great advantages to their adversaries.

Some have imagined; that by *Death* is mean'd eternal Life in Misery: But that is only a metaphorical Death; and there is no reason, from the words of the Scripture, to believe any other Death was mean'd than a literal one. *Adam* was made of the dust of the ground; and God breathed into him the breath of Life: and by Death that Life was lost, and his Body returned to dust again, and his Spirit to God who gave it<sup>g</sup>. So that we have no right to understand it of any other Penalty, than the loss of that Life which he had newly received. It was the same *Death*, which the Apostle says passed upon all men<sup>h</sup>; and is opposed to the Resurrection to Life, in *Christ*<sup>i</sup>: and every other sense of the word is forced and unnatural; and such as it cannot be supposed that *Adam* had any Idea of: and the History explains it in this Sense, when it recounts the infliction of the Penalty; and all the days that *Adam* lived were 930 years; and he died<sup>k</sup>: for who can believe, that the Death he underwent was any other than the same that was threatened?

Others think, by *Death* was mean'd eternal Death; or a Death that would never end: but this is inconsistent with the hopes of a Resurrection to Life, which we all believe; both *Jews* and *Christians*:

<sup>e</sup> II Kings xx. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Luke ii. 26.

<sup>g</sup> Eccles. xii. 7.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. v. 12.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. xv.

<sup>k</sup> Gen. v. 5.



and besides, we have no Right to extend the Penalty; beyond what the words themselves require. As this was a solemn Covenant between God and Man, in which the Terms to be observed were explicate on the *one* hand; there can be no reason to suspect, that there could be any thing intended in the Penalty; but what was precisely specified on the *other* hand. And as there is no mention there made of *eternal* Death; nor hint of any other sense of the word *Death*, than what we find in other parts of the *Mosaic* Writings; we have no reason to understand it any otherwise, than as it is denounced against the infraction of the *Mosaic* Law; and in the same sense, in which all Nations understand it; when they make it the Penalty of capital Crimes. And thus it was understood, by our antient Commentators; who assert the Serpent to have been *Samael*, the angel of Death: and R. *Menahem* on *Levit. xxv* from the *Cabalists*, tells us; "all the Souls, who are created and become unclean by the filthiness, which the Serpent brought upon *Eve*; must needs die, before the Coming of the *Messiah*: &c. and, at the Coming of the *Messiah*, all Souls shall be consummated thenceforth." So then the belief of our antient Rabbins was; that the Life, which was lost by *Adam*, was again to be restored; and, consequently, the Death threaten'd was only to be for a time.

But, though *Adam* suffered the Penalty denounced; we have no reason to consider *this*, as his *final* Judgement; for, notwithstanding this Transgression, he might have spent the remaining years of his Life in a very virtuous and pious manner. And there are other instances in Scripture, of Men, who have been punished with Death for a single Transgression; who without doubt, when the whole of their conduct is examined-into at the last day, will be found well-pleasing to God; and fit to be partakers of eternal Life. And in truth, this was the case of *our* great Lawgiver himself; who was debarred from going into the holy Land, and ordered to die in Mount *Nebo*; because of his transgression in *Meribah Kadesh*, in the wilderness of *Zin*. And therefore, though Death may be a proper Penalty upon some single act; yet it is not therefore to be looked-upon as a just and adequate Judgement upon a Man's whole Conduct in life; which will be all considered by a righteous and impartial Judge, before he

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxxiv. 1. xxxii. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers, xv. 32. &c.



can possibly pass Sentence upon him; according to his real Merit and personal Character. But every one, who shall be found at the last day to have acted with such Piety and Sincerity, as shall be well pleasing to God; (notwithstanding those accidental failings, which no man is always sufficiently guarded against;) shall, according to the Christian Scripture, be considered as the proper Objects of his Favour.

It is probable; that, before *Adam* had receiv'd from God any intimation, that his race was to be continued; he knew not, but he should immediately die: much less could he know, at that time, that he should ever be rais'd again from the dead. For as, on the *one* hand, there was no principle of Justice or Equity; which required that God should continue him always in a state of Death, which he had never threaten'd; so, on the *other* hand, there was no principle of Justice or Equity; that made it necessary to raise him again to that Life, which he had forfeited by his Disobedience. God had therefore an absolute Power and Right, free from any obligation of Promise or Threat, to do as he pleased; without any impeachment of his Justice or Mercy. — But, when it afterwards appeared to *Adam*, that God design'd to continue his race; and they were to live in a state, where Death was not pronounced against every Sin; but the good and bad were to pass their lives together in the same Society; it was very natural for him to conclude, that God design'd a future state of Existence for the Righteous; after this Life should be ended: or else he would not continue a World, where Vice and Virtue have such equal Consequences; that “one thing happens to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not.” This Conclusion the new Testament allows us to make; when it is said of the Patriarchs, “but now they desire a *better* Country; that is, a *heavenly*; wherefore God is not ashamed, to be called their God: (or rather, God doth not make them ashamed, in being called their God:) for he hath prepared for them a City.” That is to say, in other Words; God would not have placed good men in *this* World, to go through the fatigues and troubles and disasters of it; if he had not designed them for a *better*. And therefore it is a very wrong Conclusion, which some Christians make;

<sup>1</sup> *Eccles. ix. 2.*

<sup>2</sup> *Heb. xi. 16.* see Dr. Sykes.

that,



that, if there had been no Redemption, all Mankind would have been damned: for it seems a much more rational Conclusion, that the race of Men would not have been continued. A Writer in the Unitarian Tracts says; "If God had not resolved to redeem Mankind, he would have plunged *Adam* and *Eve* into the pit of Hell; immediately after their Sin: and would not have suffered them to propagate a wretched Progeny, who were under a Necessity of Sinning. But seeing God preserved the World, and bare with Men; it was an infallible sign he would assist them, as far as was necessary, to recover the Liberty of the sons of God; which is confirm'd by the apostle *Paul. Rom. ii. 4. 14. 15*".

There are many; who, in order to account for the present weakness and wickedness of Mankind, imagine; that, upon the Fall of *Adam*, the human Faculties were depraved; either naturally, by some taint derived from Him; or by some act of God. But the Scriptures say no such thing; and we want no such Hypothesis, to account for them: because the very same Reason or Cause, be it what it will, which accounts for the Sin of the *first* Man, who came pure out of the hands of the Creator; will account for the Sins of *all* Men ever since: and to suppose that God would deprave the Will, or weaken the Understanding of Men, merely as a Punishment for what they could not help; is a most unworthy imputation upon the divine Goodness: and it is no less so upon his Wisdom; as if he were capable of contradiction and inconsistency. For, if He designed to give them eternal Life; why did he make them less capable of gaining it? and, if he did not design it; why did he send them a Saviour? This notion was first invented, to shew the certainty of eternal Damnation to all the posterity of *Adam*; if *Christ* had not died: for as much as by this Taint or Corruption of Nature it was rendered impossible for them to do things well pleasing to God. But this Argument proves *too much*; and therefore concludes *nothing*. For, the less capable a Man is of Perfection, the less will be required of him: And, if it were impossible for him to do things well pleasing to God; it would cease to be his Duty.

Upon this mistake the generality of Christians have built an other, equally inconsistent with their own Scriptures; that, upon account



of this depravation of the Will and natural Powers of Man at the Fall, a Mediator was at first introduced; as a kind of Supplement to the Original Scheme, which was interrupted by *Adam's* Sin. But this is not true. For it was the Original design of God, before the foundation of the World, to bring Mankind to Happiness; by the same Person, whom he has since constituted a Prince and a Saviour; having appointed him from the beginning, according to the different circumstances of the World, and under the different Characters of the *Angel* of the Covenant, and the *Messiah*, to minister to the Will of the Father in all things relative to the Salvation of Man; and to do every thing that was necessary according to his Will, *pro re nata*, to bring down upon them those Blessings, for which they were created and designed.

Some of the Christians maintain, contrary to the first Principles of Christianity and even natural Religion; that the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin descended upon his Posterity: and also the Punishment. But this is impossible; from the nature of Justice. For Justice requires, that the Punishment shall not be extended beyond the Guilt; and Guilt is merely personal, and inseparable from the agent who contracted it; for no one can be guilty of a fault, properly speaking; but He that committed it. It cannot therefore descend from one Person to another. And, if the Guilt cannot descend, neither can the Punishment; for, if the Punishment were to descend without the Guilt, it would fall upon the Innocent: but this it will not do, because God is just; and Justice requires (as above) that Punishment shall not extend beyond Guilt. Now it is impossible that the Posterity of *Adam* should have been concerned at all in his Guilt, or even privy to it; because they were not in being, when the Guilt was contracted: and consequently, if God is just, they are not accountable for it. "How many volumes, says Bp. Taylor, have been writ about Angels, about Immaculate Conception, about Original Sin; when all that is solid Reason or clear Revelation in all these three articles, may be reasonably enough comprized in forty lines!"

To confirm this Error, some argue from the Words of St. Paul; that, if in *Adam* all died, then Death was the Punishment inflicted



upon his Posterity for his Sin. To which it is very justly answered; that Death was the *Consequence* of his Sin; but it was not a *Punishment* of it: and these are very different things; notwithstanding the Suffering may be the same. But let us examine what Mr. Chubb has advanced upon the Subject. "The Evils, says he, are just the same; whether they are considered as a Punishment for *Adam's* Sin, or only a natural Consequence thereof. They are equally the same, in themselves; and equally the same, as to those who bear them: and, he imagines, the Character and Conduct of the Deity are equally affected by it. And again; if these Evils are considered as Afflictions laid upon our Species, on account of *Adam's* Sin; this is not to be admitted: but then conjure them into a Consequence of *Adam's* Transgression; and all is right."

To which it may be answered, as follows. That Death is the same identical Suffering, in both Cases; is supposed in the question: but it was neither the same thing, as to the conduct of the Deity; whether it was merely a Suffering or a Punishment: nor the same thing, as to the Sufferer. As to the Conduct of the Deity, it is entirely consistent with his Justice to afflict an innocent Person; in order by that means to promote his Happiness: or to place different Men in different Circumstances, with regard to their happiness in this Life; and to give eternal Life to whom he pleases: but it is utterly inconsistent with Justice; to afflict an innocent Person, by way of Punishment; for this plain reason, because he is innocent. And as to the Sufferer; the same Suffering will be very different to him, according to the light in which he views it. If a Man should be condemned to lose a Limb, as a Punishment; it would be a very different thing to him, from suffering an Amputation to preserve Life; though the Pain would be the same. Or, if a Prince should order an Officer upon a dangerous Attack; it would be a very different thing from his ordering him to undergo the same risque of Life, as a Punishment. In short, no wise and brave Man would refuse to suffer; if the consequential Advantages in view would make it worth his while: and none but a Fool would suffer a voluntary Evil, without some Advantage in view; either to Himself or Others. This is so plain; that even a Child can distinguish between them:



and will voluntarily suffer, with a Reward in view, the same pain; which he would never suffer voluntarily, as a Punishment.

It may be farther urged; that Death was not a Punishment to the posterity of *Adam*, because they were deprived of no Right; for, had the death of *Adam* been immediately inflicted, They would never have existed; and, if they had no right to Existence, they could have none to the Continuance of it. Whatever Portion of Life they received, was the free Gift of their Crëator; and therefore it could not be a Punishment, that it was not of longer continuance. The Loss of Life would have been no Punishment, to *Adam himself*; if it had not been inflicted upon him *judicially*, as the Penalty of Sin; but it had pleased God to have created him for an existence of 930 years, and he had then died without any condemnation: and it can with no more reason be called a Punishment upon his Posterity; that their Lives shall not be extended in this World, beyond the natural Dissolution of the Body. In short, they are in the Condition of a Person, to whom the Lease of an Estate is given freely, and of mere bounty, for a few years; Who, instead of being thankful for it, complains of it as an Injury, or at least as a Hardship upon him; because it was not given him for a longer Term.

But the most material Consideration, which ought abundantly to satisfy us in our present State, and prevent all Complaint that we are not created under the same Conditions as our first Parent, is this; that it would have been of no Use and Benefit to us: because we should all of us, by some Sin or other, have forfeited Life, as he did; and stood in need of a Redemption from Death, as we now do: for, that we have all sinned, will require no proof. So that, instead of complaining of Death as an Evil, we should consider it as the wise and merciful appointment of God upon the Introduction of Sin; in order to prevent a thousand Evils in *this* world, which we should otherwise be subjected to; and admonish us to prepare for a more lasting and valuable home in a *better*. And, if Death serves to such excellent uses, it is our best Friend <sup>1</sup>.

Upon the whole; there is nothing, in the Scripture account of the Fall of Man; and the present State of his Posterity, in consequence

<sup>1</sup> See Essay on the beauty of the Divine CEconomy, by H. Taylor: page 14.



of it; which, when properly considered, appears in any respect inconsistent with the divine Attributes; or the nature of Man. And it would be so far from any benefit to *us*, to have the promise of eternal Life, upon the same Condition as *he* had; that we are in a much safer and better state as we are: as I shall shew in its proper place. And, after all the Objections that have been made to this History, there never was one good Reason given; why God, when he created Man, should not first suffer him to try his own strength; with the great prize of eternal life in view, to encourage his best endeavours: before he should vouchsafe to give it him in any other way. Nor can it be shewn, that there ever was any bad consequence from this trial; much less, any Curse upon *Adam* or his Posterity: But quite the Reverse.—When it appeared in the Event, that Man had not gained eternal Life; by a perfect Obedience to the Law which God had given him, according to the Conditions stipulated; God, of his own Grace and Bounty, offered it as a free Gift to all his Posterity; who manifest, by their love and regard to his commands, and their benevolence to their fellow-creatures, that they are fit to be trusted in such a state; and are meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light.

We see then, that *Adam* was condemned by a Law; which was mercifully designed to give him an opportunity of gaining eternal Life, in reward of his own good behaviour; without the mediation of any other Being.

But, what was mean'd to give Life and Happiness, was, through his own fault, the cause of Guilt and Death; and this Death, by the rigorous nature of Law, would have been without Redemption; had not the Goodness and Mercy of the Lawgiver interposed, to restore him again to Life. *Leges enim rem surdam, inexorabilem, nihil laxamenti nec veniæ habere: periculosum esse in tot humanis erroribus solâ innocentia vivere.*—But though the Law condemns, without mercy or relaxation; it does not prevent the mercy and benevolence of the Lawgiver: *esse gratiæ locum, esse beneficio: inter amicum & inimicum (Regem) discrimen nosse.* These words of the Roman Historian extremely well express the unavoidable Condemnation of our first Parent; and the grounds of his future Hopes, after the Sentence pass'd;



agreeably to the Words of *Hosea*: O *Israel*, thy *Destruction* is of *thy self*; but in *me* is thy *Hope*.

How the Redemption from this state of Death was to be brought about; is a matter of great dispute. However, it is certain; that it could not be in any way, contrary to the nature of Man; or the Divine attributes of Justice and Goodness. And therefore, all such Doctrines, as explain it in a sense inconsistent with these, though maintain'd by Men of the highest Character, must be rejected; if we would defend Christianity upon the principle of Truth.—The method of it consistent with Scripture and Reason shall be proved hereafter: at present I shall only prepare the way to it; by shewing, in what manner it has pleased God to act in similar Circumstances; and obviating some Objections, which arise from the mistaking notion of it.

If we look into the fourteenth chapter of the book of *Numbers*, and the ninth of *Deuteronomy*; we shall find the whole Nation of the *Israelites* twice under the same Circumstances with *Adam* at the time of his Condemnation. Once, when they made the molten image in *Horeb*; and afterwards, when they were going to stone *Caleb* and *Joshua*, within sight of the Holy Land: at both which times the Nation was so far condemned by God, that he declared to *Moses*: “Let me alone, that I may destroy Them and blot out their name from under Heaven; and I will smite them with Pestilence, and disinherit them; and I will make of Thee a nation mightier and greater than they.” In like manner, had it pleased God to put an End to the Race of *Adam*; he might have raised up from the dust an other Race of Men, to inherit the Blessings which were originally design'd for Him and his Posterity.

But this offer our great Lawgiver, with a truly noble and generous Spirit, magnanimously refused: (Let any other Nation in the world produce such an instance of disinterested Patriotism!) and upon prayer to God, that he would remember his Servants *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and suggesting that the People were his *own* people, and his *own* inheritance; which he had delivered from *Egypt*, by his mighty Power; and whose Iniquities he had pardoned ever since, by his great Mercy and Goodness: (All which an unmerciful Being would have looked-upon as aggravations of their



Crimes; rather than pleas for Pardon: y<sup>e</sup> the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy Word; but, as truly as I live, all the Earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord; because all those Men, who have seen my Glory and my Miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the Wilderness; and have tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkened to my Voice; surely they shall not see the Land, which I swore unto their Fathers: neither shall any of them which provoked me see it. Here we may observe, that, though the Nation deserved Death, and God actually threatened it; yet he forgave them, upon the Intercession of *Moses*: though the Arguments *Moses* used were only directed to the divine Attributes of Mercy and Love, by which he had so long preserved and saved them. And, agreeably to what we see here, and many other instances in the Scripture, God is represented as rewarding Virtue and Righteousness in the highest manner that a benevolent and generous Man could wish for; and in a way most proper to encourage it; by granting, in answer to the Prayer and Intercession of a righteous though imperfect Man, and in reward of his righteousness, the power of obtaining Blessings, (not improper to be pray'd for) upon his Friends and Country; and becoming a Benefactor to Mankind.

From hence I argue; that a way might possibly be open for the Mercy and Goodness of God to recover and redeem our first Parents from Death, to which they had been devoted. If God would have saved *Sodom*, for the sake of the righteous persons; If he remembered *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, so as to be merciful to their Posterity for their sakes; If he would not rend the Kingdom of *Israel* from *Solomon*, for his Father *David*'s sake; If he defended *Jerusalem* against the *Affyrians*, for his own sake and for his Servant *David*'s sake; If God not only forgave *Abimelech*, upon the prayer of *Abraham*; and the friends of *Job*, upon the prayer of *Job*; but directed the delinquents to seek forgiveness by their Mediation; promising that he would accept their prayers. In short, if we find that God is always represented in the Scripture as ready to forgive; and as taking occasion of being kind and merciful to his Creatures, upon every act of Penitence and Righteousness; and ready to shower down

Gen. xxi. 2. to nos 7. I Kings, xix. 34. Gen. xx. 7. Job. xlii. 8.



his Mercies upon them, even before such an opportunity appears; whenever it is consistent with his Wisdom; and the end and design of his moral Government: if all these things be considered seriously; there can be no reason to imagine him less ready to manifest the same Goodness and Mercy, by restoring Life to our first Parents; and bringing all his posterity, who should be fit for such a State, to that Immortality; for which the race of Man was originally design'd; and this not only for his own Mercy's sake, but for the sake of that beloved Being, by whom he made us; and whose Subjects we are design'd to be, in the Kingdom which he has gain'd for us by his Righteousness; and who hath alway, from the beginning of the World, sometimes in the Character of the Angel of *Jehovah*, under which Title he reveled himself in the Bush; but more especially by his Death and Sufferings in the Character of the *Messiah*, manifested the most affectionate Love and Regard to the whole race of Man.

But though these Principles are plain and intelligible, and agreeable to the Doctrines of the old Testament; and the Christian Religion is founded upon this undeniable Truth, that the supreme Lord and Governer of the Universe has a power, consistent with all his divine Attributes, to forgive fit objects of Mercy; and to confer free Grace and Bounty undeserved, whenever it is agreeable to his Wisdom: yet this plain Doctrine has been so amazingly obscured and borne down among the defenders of Christianity, by the Metaphysical and Scholastical opinions which have for a long time prevailed; that, in apologizing for the Christian Faith, I find myself not only obliged to oppose the Arguments of the *Jews* and *Deists*; but some of the most respectable Characters in the *Christian Church*: who have endeavoured to explain the Christian Scheme upon Principles, which may be proved to be *false*; or inconsistent with Principles and Doctrines, which may be proved to be *true*.

*Grotius*, *Stillingfleet*, and other learned Men, have defended the two following propositions, as the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity; both which are contrary to the old Testament, and absolutely *false*. First, they assert; that "there is a Necessity of God's vindicating his Honour to the World, upon the breach of his Laws; if not by the suffering of the Offenders themselves, yet by the suffering of the Son of God, as a sacrifice for the Expiation of



of Sin; by undergoing the punishment of *our* Iniquities: which appears to me to be the same thing as to assert, that God is not able to forgive Sins, *dispen*, freely.

Secondly; that a person, notwithstanding his Innocency, may oblige himself, by an act of his own Will, to undergo that Punishment; which *otherwise* he did not deserve: which Punishment in that case will be just, and agreeable to Reason.<sup>1</sup> At present I shall only consider the first of these Assertions; leaving the other to be canvassed in the seventh Letter.

Now of all the religious Notions I ever met with, none ever appeared to me more contradictory to the Scriptures; or to the natural Notions which sensible Men of all Religions have entertained of the Power and Mercy and Justice of the supreme Being; than these. Shall we dare to assert, that a just and a good God actually punishes the *Innocent*; and yet is not able without, not only the *consent*, but the *actual sufferings* of an other Person, to forgive the *Penitent*? Can forgiving a *Penitent* be less agreeable to Rectitude, than punishing the *Innocent*? Will they ever persuade a *Mahometan* to receive such an unworthy notion of the divine Attributes; or think to convert a *Jew* to such doctrines, as he can prove to be false from the Law and the Prophets? Yet we are confidently told, with great Zele for the honour of God, by these most learned and respectable Divines; that God has no such Power: except the Son of God shall suffer as a Sacrifice for the Expiation of Sin, by undergoing the Punishment of our Iniquities. For there is a *necessity* of God's vindicating his Honour to the World, upon the breach of his Laws; says Bp. *Stillingfleet*.

The learned Mr. *Theophilus Gale* goes still farther; and says, "we are not to consider, what God can do of his *absolute* Justice or Dominion; for by this he may let Sin pass unpunished; but we must consider, what by his *ordinate* Justice and moral Constitution he can do. And in this regard it is most true, that God is under a *Necessity* of punishing Sin; without a Satisfaction: and he were inevitably *unjust*; if he did not punish it."

Dr. *Clarke* was not quite so peremptory and confident. This great Man knew; that Christ is never said, in the New Testament, to

<sup>1</sup> *Stillingfleet* on the Sufferings of Christ, p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Court of the Gentiles, part iv. p. 369.



be punished; though he is so often said to have suffered for us: and therefore does not venture to use that unwarrantable Word, expressly; but varies the Phrase, and softens the Doctrine, to make it less liable to exception. He tells us; "when the honour of God's laws had been diminished by Sin; it was reasonable and necessary, (notwithstanding God's Power and absolute Right of forgiving; yet in respect of his Wisdom in governing the World, it was reasonable and necessary), there should be a Vindication of the authority of his laws; and therefore, in that sense of Necessity it was necessary, either that the Sinner should perish; or some other Satisfaction should be made in his stead:" which amounts to an assertion; that punishment of Sin is *always* necessary, in the Government of the World. But this is not true: for it may, for aught we know, be more agreeable in many instances to the Wisdom of God in his governing the World, to forgive; than to punish: and in all such Instances, Punishment will not be necessary.

From whence, then, does this new invented Necessity arise; which limits and restrains the absolute Right and free Mercies of God? Is it a doctrine of Scripture? by no means: the Old and New Testament are ignorant of it. Hear what *Isaiah* says; "I even I am he, saith the Lord; that blotteth out thy Transgressions, for mine own sake; and will not remember thy Sins:" and again; Is my hand shortned at all, that I cannot redeem? and have I no power to deliver? And the new Testament declares, that God forgives us freely; ~~freely~~ and there is not one Text, in either of them, that speaks of the Sufferings of *Christ* as a Punishment; or one that says, they were intended to vindicate the Authority of God's laws; much less mentions the necessity of such a Vindication; and that God could not forgive Sins without it. This is all human invention. Dr. Sykes says, very truly; "when I look over every passage, that mentions the Effect of *Christ*'s death, or what he did, or why he suffer'd; I do not find the Authority of God's Laws mentioned among them. And can that be supposed an End of the Sufferings of *Christ*; which is not once mentioned to us; at the same time that we are immediately and directly concern'd in it; and perhaps we only?"

<sup>1</sup> Sermons, Vol. viii. p. 373. Of the Nature of the Sufferings of *Christ*, Sermon 137. p. 142. vol. ii. fol. ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Is.* xliii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* l. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Sykes' Scrip. Doct.* p. 352.



But Dr. *Clarke* tells us, this Vindication is reasonable, and necessary; notwithstanding God's Power and absolute Right to forgive. Does this Necessity then controul his Attributes, both natural and moral? Is it superior to God himself? Is any human Lawgiver so restrained; that he cannot, upon the proper submission and behaviour of the Offender, forgive the transgression of his own Laws? And is it not a perfection in God's Prerogative, to commiserate every compassionate Case; and temper and abate the severity of Law? Is not this what we mean by Mercy? and if the necessity of vindicating his laws, deprives him of this Power; can he be said to be merciful, in any Sense? And are we sure; that God is unable to forgive the sins of imperfect Creatures, in every other part of the Universe; as well as in this puny Orb, which we inhabit; unless the Son of God, or some other Person, whose Innocence and Dignity might make his Sufferings worthy to be accepted of God instead of the Punishment due to the Offender; should be punished in every other world; as well as this? If God can forgive the Sins of his Creatures freely, in any other part of the Universe; he may possibly be able to do it *here*; for what should restrain him?

The *Jews* in the days of *Christ* were well persuaded from the Scriptures; that God alone could forgive Sins: but the modern Christians have found-out, that this is a mistake: and God alone *can not* do it. But, while the Right and Power of God to forgive is allowed on all sides to be absolute, and to be founded upon the divine Nature; it must follow unavoidably, that the necessity of punishing, which is contrary to this right, cannot be absolute; but must depend upon the divine Will: and consequently, may be executed or not; as shall be most agreeable to the divine Wisdom. And Mr. *Gale* himself says the same thing in other words; "If God's punishing Sin was from a Necessity of Nature, and not from the free Constitution of his Will; he must punish Sin as necessarily, as he loves Himself: and then it will follow; that God cannot relaxate his penal Laws, as to the Time, Measure and Manner of punishing; yea, he cannot accept of the Satisfaction of a Mediator: for that is a degree of Relaxation <sup>k</sup>."

<sup>k</sup> Court of the *Gentiles*, part iv. p. 369.

Now



Now if this Necessity is neither to be found in the Scripture, nor in the Nature of things; there can be no such thing. Mr. Gale calls it a *moral* Obligation [God] is under to the Vindication of his Justice, as Ruler of the World; this, he says, some call a *natural* Congruence or Condecency; which obliges God to vindicate his own Justice: and Dr. Clarke says, it was necessary; in respect of God's governing the world.

If this be all that is mean'd by it; it might be much more intelligibly expressed, by saying; that God in his infinite Wisdom sees, that Punishment is necessary; to carry-on the government of the World: and this may in *general* be true. And so Magistrates also see, that Punishment is necessary; to carry-on the government of Societies. — But does it follow from hence, that the Magistrate is under a *necessity* to punish; and that it would be *unjust* in him to forgive? May it not be most *wise* for the Magistrate on some occasions to offer forgiveness to a delinquent; if he will return to his Duty, if he will discover his Accomplices, &c.? or more agreeable to the wisdom of God, to forgive and reform a Penitent; rather than destroy him? God himself declares; that he is merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thousands, and forgiving Iniquity and Trespases and Sin: And is all this contrary to his Wisdom, in governing the World? or is there no meaning to these Words? or is it possible, that God should so describe his own Nature; if his forgiveness depended upon the voluntary sufferings of an other Person? It remains therefore with the defenders of those great Men, to prove; that forgiveness *supposed* is *always* inconsistent with the Wisdom of God in the government of the World. And if they were able to prove it, (which is impossible, because God is merciful :) they would destroy the fundamental principle of *Christianity*.

<sup>1</sup> Mere *Power* is sufficient to *destroy*; without Wisdom or any moral Perfection: but *Goodness* and *Wisdom* are necessary to *reform* and *save*. No created Being can be so foolish and wicked; but that the wisdom of his Creator may place him in such Circumstances, if he pleases so to do; as will teach him by experience the impotency of his Folly and Wickedness, and affect him with such a sense of the divine Power and Perfection, as must in time induce him to reform his Conduct; consistently with the freedom of his Will. But what length of time may be necessary, to produce a reformation in his principles and actions; and what distress and anguish of mind may be gone through, before such a change can be made in rough and stubborn Tempers; is terrible to conceive.     λ *Ex.* xxxiv. 6, 7.



On the other side, it may with great Truth and Certainty be argued; that the Laws of God were not given, for their own sakes; but for the sake of promoting Righteousness: and consequently, when Righteousness can at any time be more effectually promoted by Forgiveness, than by Punishment; there can be no necessity to vindicate his Laws: it would be prejudicial to the cause of Virtue and Righteousness, which are the great ends and objects of the divine Government; and we may be certain, that the Almighty *Jehovah* will never forget or neglect, no not for a moment, the great end for which all his Laws are enacted: but if, by an act of well-timed Mercy, he can affect the nobler passions of Love and Gratitude; and bring us to the practise of Virtue, by gentle means, agreeable to our intelligent natures; (of which we find many instances in Scripture, where God mollifies the heart by Benefits; and brings forth Repentance and Amendment from Shame and Gratitude and Love;) God himself, as the moral Governor of the Universe, will *forbid* the vindication of his Laws, as prejudicial to his own designs; and a mere useless or rather mischievous piece of Formality. And in truth, there never can be a necessity for God to punish; but when it is most *wise* to do so: of which only he is the Judge.

Mr. *Theophilus Gale* says; this Controversy was on foot many hundred years since. For *Au'stine* held, that God could save Sinners without a Satisfaction; and *Anselme* held, that he could not. And *Bradwardine*, by the distinction of God's absolute and ordinate Power, as Rector of the World, undertakes to reconcile them. In the *former* sense of an absolute Power, he *can*; and in the *latter* sense, as Rector of the World, he *cannot* save Sinners; but by *Christ*. But the Question is; by which of these ways *will* God act? If he *can* act either by his absolute or ordinate power, as he pleases; where is the necessity to punish? and, if he *cannot*, where is his absolute Power? To have an absolute Power to forgive, and be at the same time under a Necessity to punish; is a Contradiction.—The Sophistry or at least the Confusion here arises from using the word *Necessity* in two different senses: sometimes, as it relates to the *natural* Attributes of God; such as Power, Wisdom, &c; which depend entirely upon his Nature, and are absolute and unalterable, at *all*



times and places; and sometimes, as it relates to his *moral* Attributes, and the exercise of his Power; which depends entirely on his Will and free unrestrained Volition; and this Power is exercised according to his divine Wisdom at particular times and places, as best suits the end and designs of his moral Government.

'Tis worth while to observe here; how these great Men, in defence of their Hypothesis, use Words; instead of Ideas. To say—the Sins of Men *cannot* be forgiven freely, because the Laws of God *must* be vindicated; may seem at first sight to bear some Reason and Argument: but, in truth, it is a mere *Petitio Principii*; for the two parts of the proposition are left to prove one another. He that objects to the *first* part, objects also to the *second*; and we might with as much argument prove the converse: that the Laws of God *must* be vindicated, because the Sins of Man *cannot* be forgiven. But farther, to say—the Laws of God *must* be vindicated; either means the same as to say, the breach of God's Laws must be punished; or it does not. If it means the same thing, (as it *must* do; if there be no other way of vindicating God's Laws, but punishing the breach of them;) then what is mean'd as a Reason and Argument, is mere Tautology: viz. the Sins of Men cannot be forgiven, because they *must* be punished; *that is*, because they cannot be forgiven. And if it does not mean the same thing, but there is some other way of vindicating God's Laws besides punishing; then the reasoning is false: and it does not follow, that, because the Laws *must* be vindicated, therefore the Sinner *must* be punished: for they may be vindicated in some other manner. But, in truth; whenever it pleases Almighty God to forgive Sin, it is contrary to Fact as well as to common Sense, to assert any Necessity that the Laws of God should be vindicated at all.

An Hypothesis built upon such Contradiction to the divine Attributes, must either sink with it's own weight, among all men of Sense; or will sap the very foundation of all Revelation, that is pretended to be founded upon it.

Having now done with the unscriptural Opinion of the *Christians*, who teach that God has not the Power to forgive Sins freely; or without the *punishment* of the Sinner, or of a Mediator in his stead: I am immediately called-upon, on the other hand, to answer an objection of the *Deists*; that God cannot forgive Sins by, or for the sake



Sake; or at the Intercession, of a Mediator; which is no less opposite to the Christian Doctrine. Mr. Chubb is so extravagantly sanguine upon this subject, that he tells us, "If the Apostles themselves preached any such doctrine, they were mistaking; and even a miraculous Confirmation of it, would not make it credible." And indeed, as he understands it, he may bid defiance to whom he pleases; for he entirely mistakes the Sense of the Doctrine revealed; and it is impossible that the Apostles should have understood it, in such a sense as He does.

He quotes the Texts in the Margins, and particularly *Eph. iv. 32*; to shew it to be the doctrine of the Apostles, that we are forgiven for *Christ's sake*; and then objects in this manner — "If the Apostles did teach this doctrine; viz. that it is upon *Christ's* account, and for *his* sake, that God forgives penitent Offenders;—then in this, as they greatly departed from the Truth, so they went greatly beyond the design and intent of their Master; by making *that* the ground of God's mercy to penitent Sinners, which *Christ* had not made so: and therefore, this Doctrine is no part of Christianity." And again, he says; "It may be urged, that the Apostles taught this Doctrine; that God was made placable or merciful to penitent Sinners, by the Sufferings and Death of *Christ*: as their Writings do plainly shew."

But, it must be observed here; that Mr. Chubb has never proved, nor attempted to prove, that forgiving Sins for *Christ's sake*, is equivalent to making *his* Sufferings the ground of God's mercy; or to making God placable or merciful: though he considers them as synonymous Propositions: whereas in truth they are extremely different.

And, if Mr. Chubb had studied the language of the Old Testament; and observed, that God is said to do that, for the sake of an In-

tercessor, *Chubb on Redemption, p. 97. Rom. v. 9, 10. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by (his) by the death of his Son, &c.*

*Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. In whom we have Redemption through (his) blood; even the forgiveness of Sins. Eph. iv. 32. Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake (his) hath forgiven You.—Heb. ix. 12. By (his) his own blood he entered in once into the holy place; having obtained eternal Redemption for Us.*

*1 Pet. ii. 24. Who his own self bare our Sins in his body on the Tree, iii. 18. For Christ also hath once suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust; that he might bring us to God.*

*1 Jo. i. 7. But, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light; We have fellowship with one another: and the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all Sin. Rev. i. 5. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own blood.—1 Jo. 9. For thou wast slain; and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*

F

tercessor,



tercessor; which he designed to do, prior to his Intercession; as when He directed *Abimelech* to seek for pardon by the prayers of *Abraham*, and the friends of *Job* by the prayer of *Job*; he could never have so misunderstood the Words of these Texts: but must have seen; that neither the Merits of *Abraham*, nor of *Job*, were the grounds of God's Mercy, nor that which *made* him placable or merciful; but that God was ready, and willing, and desirous to forgive, before any such prayers were made; and only waited, to do it in such a manner; as might best shew his regard to Righteousness.

Mr. *Chubb* therefore has understood the expression, *for Christ's sake*, in a sense of his own; and not in the sense of Scripture: and I will add farther; that he has understood it in a forced Sense, contrary to common use. For, when it is said; that a person does a Benefit, or forgives an Injury; upon the Intercession, or for the Sake, of an other; it is never mean'd, that such Intercession *made* the person apply'd to either benevolent, or placable; nor can it be intended to depreciate his natural disposition to forgiveness; or to exclude any other motives and considerations, which might persuade to that particular act of benevolence: but it barely means, that it was a motive to it. And one would imagine; that a person well inclined to Revelation, would rather have explained these words in any manner they are possibly capable of; than in a sense so big with Absurdity and Contradiction: for it is equally absurd and antichristian and antitheistical, to say, that any Combination of Circumstances can make God merciful or placable; as to say, that they can make him just and good and true. The Attributes of God are eternal and unchangeable, and are not to be affected by the conduct any of Being: but his providential Acts may be, and certainly are, affected by the Virtues or Vices of his Creatures; and, if they were not so affected, he could not be a moral Governor; by the exercise of a judicial Providence. Repentance is a cause or motive to forgiveness; but it does not *make* God placable or merciful.

The true sense of the Words must be taken from the Scripture; where the Phrase [*for the sake of*] is used in a popular sense, and adapted to common language. Logical and Philosophical Writers may take what pains they please to distinguish nicely and precisely.

See *Jerem. xxxvi. 3.* the



the different kinds of Causes which they speak of; as the *first* and *original* Cause, which in every thing is God himself; the *ministerial* Causes, by which he brings about his decrees; the *efficient* Cause, by which they are performed; the *final* causes or ends, for which they are design'd. But these nine distinctions and subtleties are not used in Scripture. On the contrary, whatever act is performed, let the causes, which combined to effect it, be ever so numerous; the purposes, design'd by it, ever so various; the accidental effects, ever so opposite to the ends proposed; they are all spoken of in the Scripture in the same language, as the *cause* or *reason*, by which, or for which, or for the sake of which, the action was performed. Thus with regard to the *efficient* Causes, we are said to be saved by Faith, by Works, by the Word, of God, by Baptism, by Hope, by Grace, by the Death of *Christ*, by his Life, by the words of St. *Peter*, by the words of St. *Paul*, by the foolishness of preaching, by calling on the name of the Lord, by enduring to the end, &c. by all these causes singly, we are said to be saved; in the *new* Testament; and yet it is most certain, that not one of them must be so understood, as to exclude all the rest.

The *final* Causes and *accidental* Effects are likewise spoken of in Scripture, in one and the same manner; and we are not only told, that *Christ* came into the World to save the World; and to fulfil the Law and the Prophets; and to give his Life a Ransom for many; but also that he came, not to send Peace, but a Sword; and to set a Man at variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother; though the Intent, for which he undoubtedly came, was to reconcile and unite the whole world in bonds of Amity and Love; and these were only *accidental* Consequences, which thwarted his designs. I shall add one instance, to shew, that Causes and Effects are spoken of in the same lax sense, in the *old* Testament. The Angel of God declares to *Abraham*, when he would have offered up his Son *Isaac*: "By my self have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

Gen. xiii. 17. Mat. v. 27. Mat. xx. 28. Mat. x. 34 and



and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; *because* thou hast obeyed my voice. Here the promise is made to *Abraham*, because he did not withhold his Son, his only Son; and yet it is very certain, that it was made to him long before; even before that Son was born: So that it can mean no more, than a *fresh* motive for performing what had been before promised to him.

The case is just the same; when it is said more expressly, that any thing is done for *the sake* of a thing or Person. Thus it is said, *Jo. xiv. 11.* Believe me for [*sa*] the very works' sake; *that is*, upon account of my works. And the general Sense is no more; for the words may be taken in a good or bad sense. When it is said, every one that forsaketh houses, &c. for my name's sake; [*sa*] *Mat. xix. 29.* it means, out of regard to my name; but when it is said, all these things will they do unto you, for my name's sake; [*sa*] *Jo. xv. 21.* it means the direct contrary; or, out of hatred to my name. And moreover, when a thing is done for the sake of one thing; it may also be done for the sake of an *other*: for these causes are not supposed to be inconsistent, but merely separate motives. Thus, *St. Paul* says; to whom I forgave, I forgave it for your sakes. *2. Cor. xiii. 10.* They came, not for *Jesus'* sake only; [*sa*] *Jo. xii. 9.* but that they might see *Lazarus* also. And God is said to have defended *Jerusalem* for his own sake, and for his servant *David's* sake. *1. Kings xi. 12. 19. 1. Chr. xxi. 3.* and *Herod* to have beheaded *John*, for the Oath's sake; and them that sat with him at meat. *Mat. xiv. 9.* And God does the same thing for his own sake, and his *King's* sake; and his *mercy's* sake, and his *truth's* sake, and his servant *David's* sake; and sometimes the causes are reciprocal; as when God is said to exalt the Kingdom of *David*, for *Israel's* sake; and at other times to bless the *Israelites*, for *David's* sake. And *Christ* is said to suffer for our sake; and we to suffer for his sake; *Phi. i. 29.*

We see then, what a great Liberty was open to Mr. *Chubb* of interpreting the expression, for *Christ's* sake; without fixing it to the most improbable one which the words are capable of.

However, it should be remarked; that there is no expression, in the Greek Testament; which necessarily signifies, that our Sins are forgiven us for *Christ's* sake. The words, which Mr. *Chubb* particularly fixes upon, are these; "As God for *Christ's* sake hath forgiven You:" but the original is, as God hath forgiven you

Gen. xiii. 16.

Gen. xii. 3.



in *Christ*: [*καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν* \*]. The action is here supposed to be passed; and, consequently, relates to the forgiveness of the first *Christians*; when they received the Faith. Mr. Pyle makes the following remark upon the Text — "Though it be true, that God forgives Men for *Christ's* sake; yet this seems not to be the strict meaning of *ἐν Χριστῷ* in this place. It is in *Christ*, or by *Christ*; as in *Heb. i. 1.* [God] hath spoken to us [*ὑμῖν*] by his Son; and hath accepted us [*ἐν ἀγαπῇ*]. it should have been *ἐν ἀγαπῇ* in the beloved. *Eph. i. 6.* The Sense seems plainly to be; God forgives in or through *Christ*; viz. by him preaching and declaring and granting Forgiveness upon Man's Repentance."

But there is another Sense, in which we may be said to be saved or forgiven for *Christ's* sake; that lies more open to Mr. Chubb's Objections, and against which he seems particularly to point his Arguments: to wit, that we are forgiven by his Intercession; or in answer to it.

Now though I think, we are no where said expressly in the Scripture to be forgiven for the sake of *Christ's Intercession*; and the word *ἐν Χριστῷ* rather relates to his care over us, in managing our affairs as a mediator; than any actual address to God in our behalf: yet, as we are certain, that he did pray for us; we may be sure, his Prayers were not useless; and, consequently, his Intercession was one cause or motive of our Salvation; and a motive, which does by no means interfere with the free grace of God; which is the original or first mover in our Salvation; or the power of *Christ*, which is the efficient cause.

There are many things in Prayer, so agreeable to our Natures; that they must be very strong arguments indeed, that can prove it of no effect to gain our wishes and desires. Our Gratitude naturally expresses itself in Thanksgiving: and every kind of Excellence demands from all intelligent Beings an Acknowledgement or Confession of it; which, when referred to God, is Praise; for, to praise God, is only to speak the Truth of him, and declare what we see and know of him; and our Dependence on any one so naturally expresses itself in Petition, that it is looked upon as a necessary act in the Depend-

\* *Eph. iv. 32.* *ἐν Χριστῷ* makes intercession for us; by negotiating and managing, as our friend and agent, all the affairs relating to our Salvation. Taylor on the Romans. viii. 27. In *Act. xiv. 24.* it signifies to deal-with, in a bad Sense.



ent; be the Patron ever so well inclined to gratify him: because it is fit and right; that he, who receives a Favour, as a Dependent; should by some overt-act express, that he does not expect it, as his Right and Due; but as an act of Grace and Favour: and therefore, when God had promised by the prophet *Ezekiel*, how abundantly he would at last bless them with spiritual, and temporal blessings; after all he adds: "I will yet for all this be inquired-at by the house of *Israel*, to do it for them." And, if this were not the case, God would not have encouraged us to pray to him; nor, without such Hopes, would *Christ* himself have prayed: for Prayer without Hope is mere empty Sound.

I shall therefore consider our Saviour's Intercession, in the sense in which Prayer has been used by all good men, whether Christians, Jews or Heathens, as a *motive* and *reason* with the supreme *febeuab* to grant us our requests. And this notion of Prayer is founded, not only upon the Authority of the Apostles; but of *Christ* himself. So that Mr. *Chubb*'s objections will reach farther, than, I imagine, he intended. St. *John* says, this is the Confidence we have in him; (i. e. in God) that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him; because we keep his Commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight: and *Christ* himself says, all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive: and the effect of Prayer is not confined to ourselves, but extended to all men: and if we are commanded to pray for one another; for Kings, and all that are in Authority; and particularly for our Friends and Brethren: what reasonable objection can be made to the Intercession of *Christ* for us all; whether we be considered as his Subjects, or his Brethren! Indeed, it would be inconceivable; that *Christ*, who frequently spent whole nights in Prayer, should never pray for the Success of his Ministry: or that God Almighty should not bless him with Success, in answer to his Prayers: that *his own* Pleasure might prosper in *his* hand.

If it be objected to this; that the Prayers of the Righteous can never charge the designs of God, who is unchangeable; it is allowed: but we have no reason to believe, the Designs of God are ever absolutely

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Jo. v. 14.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Jo. iii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxi. 22. Mar. xi. 24. Luc. xi. 9. Jo. xiv. 13. xv. 16. xvi. 23, 24.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. <sup>6</sup> 1 Jo. v. 16. <sup>7</sup> Jo. xvii. <sup>8</sup> Ps. xlix. 6. <sup>9</sup> Ps. lxxiii. 10.

deter-



determined: except, where he has declared them to be so; or when it necessarily follows from his Attributes.

But let us consider the Nature of Prayer and Intercession, in these three Cases.

1. In regard to such events, as are unfix'd and undetermined by God; and indifferent.

2. In regard to such, as are already determined contrary to our requests.

3. In regard to such events, as are agreeable to the Will of God; and such as he approves of.

In many very interesting affairs of this world, we know by Revelation, that the Will of God is frequently undetermined, and conditional, and dependent upon the good or ill behaviour of societies and private men. Thus God speaks to the *Israelites*; If ye walk in my Statutes, then will I give Peace—but, if ye will not hearken unto me—then will I set my face against you—and, if ye will not be reformed, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you in fury; and ye shall eat the flesh of your Sons &c. This twenty-sixth chapter of *Leviticus* is entirely conditional, and regards the whole *Jewish Nation*; and consequently, the decree to reward or punish them could not be fix'd and absolute either way, when these Promises and Threats were reveled.

If our Nation had obeyed God, He would have extended their Empire; but, as they did not, He raised-up the *Assyrians*, *Babylonians*, &c. to afflict and punish them. The same uncertain and conditional state of events, with regard to the whole *Jewish Nation*, is very remarkable in the Song of *Moses*. And if such great Events as these are undetermined and conditional, in which whole Empires are concerned; the smaller ones, which were only necessary to bring about the greater; and all the consequences of these greater events, must also be undetermined; and the same conditional Providence must unavoidably extend in like manner to Individuals: and so it is declared in many instances—as particularly, when *Jeremiah* declares to *Zedekiah*, thus saith the Lord of Hosts; if thou wilt assuredly go forth to the King of *Babylon's* Princes, then thy Soul shall live; and this City shall not be burned with Fire<sup>a</sup>. And, if this be

<sup>a</sup> Lev. xxvi.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. xxxii.

See also Jer. xxii. 3, 4.

<sup>c</sup> Jer. xxxviii. 17.

Act. xxvii. 31.

32. See 1. Sam. xiii. 13.



the true State of the Case, the Subject of Prayer is infinite; and the benefit of it may be so too, without supposing it to produce any change in the Will of God; as will more clearly appear, from the nature of Causes and Effects.

God is the original Cause of every effect; and directs all Actions, in their ultimate tendency, to some great and good and wise End; and in general, if not always, carries on his designs by his Creatures; in order to employ, amend, and improve Them. And, as every Action may have many different Consequences; and He sees the several Uses, that can be made of every one of them: the same Act, which serves to complete *one* purpose, may be so directed by his Wisdom and Power; as to begin, carry on, or complete *many others* at the same time: and every Effect, that is thus brought about, becomes a Cause to carry on the designs of God still farther; and the whole Universe is by these means kept in action in all its parts at once, both as Cause and Effect; and the designs of God move forward by his superintendence, and his interposition whenever he pleases, to that ultimate great and good and wise end; as certainly, as if it were a single Atom, impressed in any given Direction; and yet consistently with the free Will of his Creatures. For if the Causes, which operate at any given Time, are not sufficient to effect his purpose; He can combine or produce others that are: And as every single effect may be produced by an infinitely various combination of Circumstances; (suppose the destruction of the Temple, or the building it up again) these may be determined for a long time before; and yet that very Time, the Persons concerned, and the several Causes necessary to bring about these things, may continue uncertain and arbitrary; till near the time of their accomplishment. Thus, a *Nebuchadnezzar* may be suddenly raised up, for the Destruction of the Temple; or a *Cyrus*, for its Restoration. An instance of this we find in the Case of *Saul*; when *Samuel* declares to him: "Now would the Lord have established thy Kingdom upon *Israel* for ever; but now thy Kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own Heart, &c."

The tracing the Chain of Causes is the most noble Pursuit of Philosophy; but we meet with no Case, but what is in itself to be considered as an Effect; and are able to number but few Links of the Chain. *Maclaurin*, account of *Sir J. N.* p. 17.

\* 1 Sam. xiii. 13, &c.



And if it should so happen, that the accomplishment of his designs, in any one out of a thousand combinations of circumstances, by which it might be completed, should add to the happiness of such men, as *Moses*, *Daniel*, or *Job*; this Consideration may be of sufficient weight with God, to determine the Event in compliance with their Prayers; rather than in any way, not attended with so good an effect. Thus we find the City of *Zoar* was saved, at the instance of righteous *Lot*<sup>1</sup>. And we may be always certain, that an Almighty and all-perfect Being will never act in an arbitrary manner; when it is possible to act otherwise: or where the action may be so directed by him, as may tend to the reward and encouragement of Virtue. And thus the Subject as well as the Benefit of Prayer may be infinite.

I shall only observe farther, upon this head; that the unalterable decree of God to judge every man according to his works, as a righteous Judge and moral Governor; does by no means interfere with his conferring whatever Benefits he pleases, as an all-powerful Creator: in respect of which his determinations may be always open to the Prayers of the Righteous; to the very time of their Completion.

2. I shall consider Prayer, with regard to such events; as are already determined contrary to our Requests.

And in this case it is certain, that our Prayers will not be granted: And therefore in the Scriptures we are ordered not to make such things the Subject of our Prayers. For thus saith the Lord to *Jeremiah*: Pray not thou for this People—for I will not hear them, when they cry unto me for their trouble<sup>m</sup>. And again; thus said the Lord unto me: Pray not for this people, for their good<sup>n</sup>. And again; then said the Lord unto me: though *Moses* and *Samuel* stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this People: cast them out of my Sight; and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass; if they shall say unto thee, whither shall We go forth? then thou shall tell them, thus saith the Lord; such as are for Death, to Death; and such as are for the Sword, to the Sword; and such as are for the Famine, to the Famine; and such as are for the Captivity, to the Captivity<sup>o</sup>. And the new Testament speaks in the same manner<sup>p</sup>; agreeably to the Example of *Christ*. *Jo.* xvii. 9.

3. Let us consider the effect of Prayer, with regard to such events; as are agreeable to the Will of God: or such as He approves

<sup>1</sup> *Gen.* xix. 20.    <sup>m</sup> *Jer.* xi. 14.    <sup>n</sup> *Jer.* xiv. 11.    <sup>o</sup> *Jer.* xv. 1, 2.    <sup>p</sup> *I John*, v. 16, 17.



of. And here it is objected; that all such things, as are agreeable to the Will of God, will certainly be accomplished; whether we pray or not: and therefore, in this case, our Prayers will be as useless; as when we pray for things improper. But this Objection is founded on a mistaking notion; that the Will of God is always absolute: whereas it is frequently only conditional.

There is no doubt, but in all cases, where the Will of God is absolute; as in the Resurrection of the Dead, both good and bad; it will certainly be accomplished: whether we pray or not. But, when it is the design of God, that Mankind should bring down blessings upon themselves, as his dependents and creatures; by the propriety of their behaviour in their addresses to him, as their Creator and Benefactor; this End could not be answered in any other manner, than by granting his Blessings in answer to their Prayers: For Blessings, given in reward of Virtue and Piety, are the highest encouragements to the practise of Virtue and Piety. And therefore, when the Deist argues; that, if it is agreeable to the Will of God to grant Salvation to Mankind; he will grant it, without a Mediator: and, if it be not agreeable to his Will to grant it; he will not grant it, for the sake of a Mediator: he mistakes a conditional decree for an absolute one; and argues as weakly, as if he were to conclude; that, if it were agreeable to the Will of God to grant us a plentiful Harvest, he would grant it without our labour in plowing and sowing; and, if it were not his Will, he would not grant it by means of it: or, as Mr. *Richard Price* expresses the same thought in a better manner; If it is fit, that our Sins should be forgiven; God will forgive us, if we do not repent: and, if it is unfit, our Repentance will be of no use.

There are many instances in Scripture; where we see, as plainly as in these; that the particular manner, in which the Providence of God acts, is as necessary; as the event proposed. So that, if it was not done in that particular manner, it would not be done at all. This is equally remarkable; in natural, as in revealed Religion. We know, without the help of Revelation; that it is agreeable to the Will of God, that the distresses of Mankind should be relieved; and yet we frequently see them left to the precarious Benevolence of their fellow-Creatures, whether they shall be relieved or not: and, if they are not relieved by them, they are not relieved at all. In the case of Revelation, I shall instance the affair of *Naaman the Syrian*. God



was well pleased, that he should be healed of his Leprosy; but he was not willing, that it should be done; except in one particular manner: which might at the same time serve the cause of Righteousness, by bringing Honour and Reverence to the God of *Israel*. *Abana* and *Pharphar* were as famous, as any of the Rivers of *Israel*. Could he not wash in Them, and be clean? yes, certainly he might; if the design of God had been no more than to heal him: or it might have been done, as *Naaman* expected, by the Prophet's striking his hand over the place; without any washing, or even any appearance of the hand of Providence. But the healing Him was not the only design of God, nor the most important one; though it was the most remarkable event: God had a moral end in view, which could not be brought about by any of the above methods; and the manner of the Cure was of more importance in the designs of God, than the Cure itself: the effect being produced for the sake of manifesting to the whole Kingdom of *Syria* the great Power of the God of *Israel*; by which the Cure was performed. It does not therefore follow; that, because it is agreeable to the Will of God to grant a Petition, or dispense a Favour; for *Christ's* sake, or upon account of his Intercession; that he would have dispensed the same Favour in any other manner: for perhaps there was no other way, in which it could be done; consistent with Wisdom and the Cause of Righteousness.

And, if Mr. *Chubb* had not been greatly embarrassed with the notion, that the Doctrine of Forgiveness for *Christ's* sake was to be understood in such a manner; as to prevent, or rather to pervert, the just and impartial Judgement of the great Day; by declaring the wicked to be just, by a mere act of Grace and Favour, and contrary to Fact; there is no reason to believe, he would have made any objection to our Salvation for his Sake: Because in the sense I am considering it, as free from those difficulties; he has plainly argued in behalf of the *Christian* doctrine, though he was not aware of it: by asserting, that "God may, if he pleases, shew kindness to his Creatures; independent of all Merit"<sup>1</sup>. A Concession, which is most certainly true; or else there would be no Creation, nor Forgiveness: but it overturns all the Objections he has made upon this subject; as far as the true *Christian* Doctrine is concerned. For, if God can shew Kindness to Mankind, independent of their Merit; He can

<sup>1</sup> Inquiry concerning *Redemption*, p. 97.



certainly shew the same or greater Kindness to them, if it should in any degree promote the Joy or Honour of his beloved Son; whom he loves and esteems: and therefore God may advance the Joy and Honour of *Christ*, in this way; as well as in any other, that would be equally agreeable to him; and Mankind may be blessed for the sake of *Christ*, independent of their own Merit: and, if *Christ* should petition such a Blessing to them, as a Favour and Reward to Himself; the Grant might be in answer to his Petition. And nothing could be objected to this, but their being improper Objects of such Favour; which I shall consider presently.

Let the question lie, as it actually happened between Man and Man; and then I argue—If *David* might confer favours upon *Chimham* the Son of *Barzillai*, independent of his Merit; and was at the same time willing to grant such a favour to *Barzillai* himself, as should be most agreeable to him; and *Barzillai* should intercede for a favour to his son; there can be no reason given, why such a blessing should be withheld. And this was the fact, entirely agreeable to our notions of Rectitude and Propriety; when *Barzillai* the *Gileadite* came down from *Rogelim*, and went over *Jordan* with *David*, to conduct him over *Jordan*; to whom when the King offered a Reward, he refused it for Himself: but behold, says he, thy Servant *Chimham*, let Him go over with my Lord the King; and do to Him what shall seem good unto Thee. Now there can be no good reason given, why *Chimham* should not receive the Favours upon his Father's Intercession. But Mr. *Chubb* says, upon the parallel Case in our Redemption by *Christ*; “No—the Reward would be placed upon a wrong Object”<sup>s</sup>. But this is not true. For, though the Son receives a Blessing, as a Favour; it is no Reward to Him: but as much a free Gift, as if there had been no Intercession made. The Reward is the Father's; and in that Sense the King considered it, in his answer: *Chimham* shall go over with me; and I will do unto Him, that which shall seem good unto Thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that shall I do for Thee. And, in like manner, the Blessings bestowed on Mankind are considered in the Scripture, as a Reward to *Christ*; and a Joy, that was set before Him.

And therefore, when Mr. *Chubb* adds; that, on such a Supposition, the absence of Virtue would be favoured; while Virtue itself would go unrewarded: it may be answered, from his own Words; “that

<sup>r</sup> II Sam. xix. 31, 37, 38.

<sup>s</sup> *Chubb*, p. 93.



God may shew Mercy to his Creatures, independent of all Merit;" and this is the same thing as to say, that the absence of Virtue may be favoured; which he here objects to as improper. But Virtue does not go unrewarded; if the Father receives a Reward and Satisfaction, in the Favours bestowed upon the Son. And therefore it may be true, for any thing this Writer hath advanced to the contrary; that *our* Sins may be forgiven for the sake of a Mediator, who loved us and gave himself for us; and upon *his* account, as a thing agreeable to *him*, and as a reward of *his* meritorious Obedience, and in answer to *his* Intercession. And yet these things can neither singly nor collectively be considered by the Apostles, as the *ground* of God's Mercy; or that which *made* him placable or merciful: because they all declare, that God himself first planned the method of Forgiveness in this manner; and sent his Son, of his own free grace and favour, to execute it: and, consequently, was placable and merciful; prior to any such Mediation or Intercession.

But here it is objected; that "forgiveness of Sin is not of the same nature with other Favours or Blessings; because it depends upon the State and Temper of the Persons concern'd: So that, if it be in the nature of the thing *right*, that God should pardon penitent offenders; then he *will* certainly do it; and he will do it for this reason, because it is right that he should: this motive being sufficient to determine the divine Will, to do what is right and fit; exclusive of all other motives or considerations whatsoever: and, if it be in the nature of the thing *wrong*, that God should pardon penitent offenders; then it is most certain, that God *will not* pardon them; and he will not do it for this reason, *viz.* because it is wrong and unfit that he should: nor will any consideration prevale with him to act thus; it being morally impossible that the Merits of ten thousand Redeemers, or any Application or Intercession to him, should prevale with him to do what is *wrong*."

Now if we examine, how far the Christian and Deist are agreed; in what Mr. Chubb has here laid down, as an objection to our Forgiveness by a Mediator; we shall easily see, that he has entirely mistaken the true State of the Case;

1. then, it is agreed between the Christian and the Deist; that no Considerations whatsoever will prevale with God to act contrary to Rectitude. And

2. it



2. it is agreed between the Christian and Deist, that it is consistent with Rectitude to forgive penitent Sinners; these being the only proper objects of forgiveness.

3. from hence, it follows; that, unless it can be proved, that the *Christian* Scriptures teach a Doctrine contrary to this; viz. that God will, for the sake of a Mediator, forgive the impenitent and obstinate Sinner; all that is here said by Mr. *Chubb* is no more an objection to Christianity, than to Deism. But this Doctrine can neither be proved from the Forgiveness of Sins, when the Gospel was first reveled; nor from the account which is given of the day of Judgement. For, when the Gospel was first preached, those only were forgiven; who repented of their former sins, and received the *Christian* doctrine to be the rule of their future Conduct: And, at the day of Judgement, it is plainly reveled, that we shall be judged according to our Works; and the wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the righteous into Life eternal.

Here then we find; that, though Forgiveness of Sin depends upon the state and temper of the Persons concerned; yet, as it regards none but Penitents, whom it is right and fit to forgive; it is of the same nature *in this respect* with all other Blessings, which it is right and fit to grant: And all that remains to be settled between the Christian and Deist is; not whether God will forgive, for the sake of a Mediator, those whom it is *wrong* to forgive; (as Mr. *Chubb* here seems to suggest;) but whether he will, for the sake of a Mediator, forgive those who alone are *the proper objects* of Forgiveness. The *act* of Forgiveness is therefore supposed to be right, both by the Christian and Deist; and they only differ in the *method* of it.

And here, I think, we may safely venture to argue; that, when it pleases God to forgive penitent Sinners, he will choose to do it in such a way; as will appear both to Men and Angels, (when they understand it) to discourage all presumptuous Hopes in a sinful Life upon that account; and promote an Obedience to his commands for the future. And nothing could be so proper to this purpose; as to manifest, that God was the Patron of Righteousness and the Rewarder of it; by forgiving only the Penitent, and rewarding the Righteousness of the Mediator, so far beyond all human conception, with the godlike powers of raising the dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal life. For it is a known Maxim in Government; that Obedience to the Laws may be encouraged, either by rewarding the Good; or punish-



punishing the Bad: and, though *human* Governments are not able to reward every one, that is obedient to its Laws; and therefore we generally see their Laws are guarded by punishing the Offender; yet it is not so with God: He can promote Obedience to his Laws either way. And it was for want of applying this Observation to the present subject, that *Grotius*, *Bp. Stillingfleet*, and other learned men have imagin'd they saw a moral Necessity that God should vindicate the laws of his Government; either by the Punishment of the Sinner; or of some other in his stead: not considering, that the laws of his Government, and the cause of Righteousness might be more effectually secured in some cases, by rewarding the Righteous; and that they could no otherwise be secured, in the case we are now considering: because the Sins of the Penitent are supposed to be forgiven, and consequently there could be no Punishment inflicted. We see then, that all *Mr. Chubb* has here advanced, when applied as an Objection to Christianity, is nothing at all to the purpose. For there is no body supposed to be punished, contrary to Rectitude, in the Christian Revelation; and no body supposed to be forgiven, contrary to Rectitude. It was fit and right, that the impenitent Sinner should be punished; and it is fit and right, that the Penitent should be forgiven.

And, if we consider farther, that Forgiveness of Sin in the Christian Revelation includes not only freedom from Punishment; but a clame to eternal Life, as the free gift of God to all whose Sins are forgiven; and which, consequently, from the very nature of a free gift, may be given to whom he pleases, and in what manner he pleases, or not given at all; The Doctrine of Forgiveness by a Mediator, and eternal Life by or through him, or for his sake, will remain unimpeach'd by any thing that *Mr. Chubb* has here advanc'd. And the Deistical Scheme will fall as far short of the Christian; as a mere freedom from Punishment falls short of an eternal Happiness.

Thus we see; how the *Mediatorial* scheme of Salvation, as far as it has hitherto been considered, may be explained; agreeably to the divine Attributes, the nature of Man, and the antient Scriptures given to our Fathers; and the fundamental Doctrine of Christianity freed from those Difficulties, with which it has been loaded both by its Friends and Enemies: viz. that Almighty God has an absolute Right either to forgive Sins, as an all-powerful Benefactor, for his own



own sake and for his Mercy's sake; or for the sake of a Mediator, and at his Intercession; as he blessed *Israel*, for the sake of *Abraham* and *David*; and forgave the Sins of *Abimelech* and the friends of *Job*, upon the intercession and for the sake of *Abraham* and *Job*; in order to manifest, how much the fervent prayer of a righteous Man prevails with *Him*; as the patron of Righteousness and Judge of all the World. And we have no reason to imagine; that God would have given Forgiveness and eternal Life to penitent Sinners, in any other way: because we cannot see how these Blessings could have been given in so safe and wise a manner; or how the tremendous Character of God, as our moral Governor and Judge, could be so effectually preserved by the punishment of the penitent Sinners; as by rewarding the Merits of *Christ* with these godlike powers, which were necessary to constitute him a Prince and a Saviour.

Upon these Principles, I shall prove in my next letter, that *Christianity* is built: and shew the whole scheme of Salvation by *Christ* to be worthy of all Acceptation, and to be one plane regular and consistent System of divine Oeconomy; from the Beginning of the world to the End of it.

ADDEND.: p. 29. After the two first lines, read as follows:

Here we see, how this great man was embarrassed: for he tells us, in an other place—"the Justice of God may seem to be most highly magnified; by supposing that it puts an absolute Necessity upon him; either of inflicting an infinite Punishment, or of demanding an infinite Satisfaction. But they, who so speak, ought at the same time to consider on the other hand; that they leave no room either for Goodness or Mercy \*."—Now, if this Observation be *true*, as it certainly is; the necessity of vindicating his Laws must be *false*: for the two propositions are absolutely inconsistent. In short; "if the Sinner repents, there can be no necessity of Punishment; for the *End* is obtained, without it: and there is nothing in Punishment, save as a *Mean*, in which Goodness can take Content \*". But let us inquire into the Nature of this supposed Necessity. Does it then controul, &c.

\* *Clarke's* Sermon. Vol. I. p. 166. fol. Vol. II. p. 214. 8vo.

^ *Whichcote's* Aphorisms, N. 268.



# CONTENTS

## OF THE

## SIXTH LETTER

<b>T</b> HAT the <i>Christian</i> scheme is a Regular Consistent and Rational Plan of divine Oeconomy, from the beginning to the end of the World	Page 49
I. It was the original design of God to bring all good Men to salvation by <i>Jesus Christ</i>	50
And this design arose from the divine Benevolence, free Grace, or Love	51
Some expressions of Dr. <i>Samuel Clarke</i> examined concerning Satisfaction, &c.	52
<i>Christ</i> did not reconcile God to the World; but he reconciled the World to God	53
The Love of God the first Mover in our Salvation	55
Dr. <i>James Foster</i> quoted	56
II. The method by which Almighty God has carried-on the salvation of Men by <i>Jesus Christ</i> , under different Characters and Dispensations	
God made the <i>Worlds</i> by him; and put the <i>Ages</i> under him	
How these <i>Ages</i> were conducted by him, till the End of the <i>Jewish</i> Oeconomy	
The Creation and Fall. The Flood. The Dispersion at <i>Babel</i> . The Call of <i>Abraham</i>	
The Covenant with <i>Abraham</i>	61
The Covenant with <i>Moses</i>	62
The Theocracy becomes almost impracticable	64
The old and new Revelations connected	66



# CONTENTS, &c.

How the Angel of the Covenant carried on the same design, after the end of the <i>Jewish</i> dispensation	Page 66
How the two Dispensations differed	67
The <i>Christian</i> Oeconomy formed, by gathering the <i>Jews</i> and <i>Gentiles</i> under one Head	70
This was the only <i>Predestination</i> spoken of in the new Testament	71
The <i>Method</i> of it explained	71
The Peculiarity of <i>Election</i> and <i>Grace</i> , continued in the <i>Christian</i> Church	72
The <i>efficient</i> cause of our Salvation will be the Exercise of the Powers which were conferred on <i>Christ</i> , in reward of his Humiliation, &c.	73
1. <i>Christ</i> came into the World, to do the will of the Father	
2. In Obedience to the will of the Father, <i>Christ</i> underwent sufferings, &c.	74
3. In reward of his Obedience, <i>Christ</i> was highly exalted and rewarded	76
4. We are saved by the exercise of these powers which <i>Christ</i> received as his reward	78
The Powers necessary to constitute <i>Christ</i> a Saviour	
1. The power of raising the Dead	
2. The power to forgive Sin	79
3. The power of judging all Men	80
An Objection considered; <i>viz.</i> what need was there of any other Saviour than God himself?	82
What necessity for the <i>Mediator's</i> sufferings and death, in order to become a Saviour?	84
The necessity of them proved, <i>a posteriori</i>	86
An Objection of the <i>Socinians</i> , with regard to the benefit of <i>Christ's</i> Example, if not a mere Man, answered	88
Why <i>Christ</i> was the particular Person chosen to be our Saviour	91
The Consequences of <i>Christ's</i> Mediation not confined to Mankind	93

LETTER



## LETTER THE SIXTH.

It is *necessary* to know, *what* God hath reveled; concerning the way of Pardon by Christ: It is *impossible* to know *more*, than he hath reveled. If men would forbear to explicate farther, there would be more Christianity; and less Controversy.

*Whichcote's Aphorisms; 1054.*

**I**N my last Letter, I undertook to prove; that Forgiveness of Sin is by no means contrary to the nature of God's government; whenever the Sinner is a *proper* object of Mercy, and Forgiveness is of more advantage to the cause of Righteousness, than Severity and Punishment. In such cases, there can be no Objection to the forgiveness of the Sinner, either by the immediate act of God; or by the mediation and for the sake of an other Person, whom God is pleased to exalt to great Glory; and reward with the Power of forgiving: And so the Sinner may be forgiven, by the grace of God, for his *own* name's sake, as the *original* Cause; and by the power of a Mediator, as the Means or *efficient* Cause by which he accomplishes his Will: in the same manner, in which it is declared in the *old* Testament, that God shewed mercy to the *Jewish* nation; both for his own sake and his Servant *David's* Sake.

I farther observed; that the Condemnation to Death did not include in it an Eternal Death; or any repugnancy to a Resurrection to Life; if it should please God to vouchsafe to mankind so great an act of Benevolence and Mercy. And from hence I argued; that our first parents, though condemned to die; yet were by no means in a desperate Condition; while under the Government of a merciful and all-powerful God: For the Love of God did not desert them, upon their expulsion from Paradise.

These things, and several others necessary to be previously considered, being already explained in my last Letter; I shall now procede to shew the *Christian* Scheme to be a regular, consistent, and

H

rational



rational plan of divine œconomy, from the beginning to the end of the World; and to that purpose shall undertake to prove—

1. that the original Design of God from the beginning was, to bring all good men to Salvation; that is, to eternal Life and Happiness; by his Son *Jesus Christ*: and the first Cause and Mover in this gracious design was the free Grace and Love of God.

2. that the Method, in which this Salvation hath been carried on through all dispensations from the beginning, hath been conducted by the Ministration of *Jesus Christ* under different names and characters; either immediately in Person, or by his Angel or Angels.

3. that the efficient Cause or Means, by which the Salvation of Man will be completed, will be the Exercise of those godlike Powers, of raising the Dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal Life; which were conferred on *Jesus Christ* by the Father, in reward of his humiliation, sufferings, and death.

I. I am to shew; that it was the original design of God from the beginning to bring all good men to eternal Life and Happiness, by his Son *Jesus Christ*; and that the first Cause and Mover in this gracious design was the free Grace and Love of God.

It is very plain, from what we are told by *Christ* himself, when he is giving an account of the future Judgement of mankind; that a Kingdom was prepared by God for the Righteous, before the foundation of the World<sup>a</sup>. And into this Kingdom the *Messiah* tells us, that all the Righteous shall be admitted; without any consideration what Nation they might belong to, or under what Dispensation they might live; but merely whether they were Righteous or Wicked<sup>b</sup>. And for this Reason *Christ* is called the Saviour of the World<sup>c</sup>; and is said to have tasted Death for every man<sup>d</sup>; and to be the Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours (that is, the *Christian's*) only, but for the Sins of the whole World<sup>e</sup>: St. *John* says, he was the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World<sup>f</sup>: and St. *Paul* says, He is the Saviour of all; especially of those that believe<sup>g</sup>: So that no man is excluded from this Salvation; who is able to stand the Judgement of the great day. And this being the original design of God, prior to our Creation, and relative to the whole World; it could arise from no other cause than Benevolence, or

<sup>a</sup> *Mat.* xxv. 34.

<sup>e</sup> *Jo.* ii. 2.

<sup>b</sup> *Mat.* xxv. 37. 41.

<sup>f</sup> *Jo.* i. 9.

<sup>c</sup> *Jo.* iv. 4.

<sup>g</sup> *1 Tim.* iv. 10.

<sup>d</sup> *Heb.* ii. 9. See *Whitby* on *2 Pet.* ii. 1.



free Grace, or Love. No other Reason can be given, why God hath created any Being at all; much less why he promised eternal Life to the *first* Man, upon his Obedience; which was done prior to his Fall, and consequently prior to any Redemption or Intercession upon that account. It was God, who cannot lie, who promised it *before the world began*<sup>b</sup>: which was hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to the Saints<sup>i</sup>: who verily was fore-ordained *before the foundation of the World*, but was manifest in these latter times<sup>k</sup>. It was according to the good pleasure of his Will<sup>l</sup>; according to the purpose of him that worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will.

All these Texts prove, that Salvation by *Christ* was decreed; prior to any Intercession or Sacrifice or Satisfaction, made to God the Father; and was the *original* design of God, when he created the World. And accordingly we find, that *Christ* came not *of himself*; but God *sent* him into the world, in order to complete that design. And we are told by St. *John*; that this was the pure effect of his Love. "God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish; but have everlasting life<sup>m</sup>:" And again; "herein is Love, not that we loved God; but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins<sup>n</sup>." "In this was manifest the Love of God towards us; because he sent his only begotten Son, that we might live through him<sup>o</sup>:" and St. *Paul* says, "God commended his Love to us; in that, while we were yet Sinners, *Christ* died for us<sup>p</sup>."

This Love of God is frequently in the new Testament called the Grace or Favour of God; [*χάρις*:] "for the proper Signification of Grace is Favour; Favour in such a sense, as denotes Mercy and Forgiveness, in a Superior; either remitting something of his Right, or conferring something beneficial upon others; *freely*, and without any obligation of debt<sup>q</sup>:" accordingly we are told by St. *Paul*, that we are justified *freely*, by God's Grace; [*δωρεάν τῇ αὐτῇ χάριτι*] that is, *gratis*, of mere grace and favour; without any payment, or recom-

<sup>b</sup> Tit. i. 2. Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. i. 4. 9. iii. 11. 1 Pet. i. 20. Rev. xiii. 8. xvii. 8.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Tim. i. 9. Col. i. 26.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Pet. i. 20.

<sup>l</sup> Eph. i. 5.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Jo. iii. 16.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Jo. iv. 10.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Jo. iv. 8. 9.

<sup>p</sup> Rom. v. 8.

<sup>q</sup> Dr. Sam. Clarke's Sermons, 8vo. vol. ii. p. 265. fol. vol. i. serm. xxix. p. 180.



pense, or equivalent<sup>r</sup>: for this is the sense of the word, wherever it is used in the new Testament<sup>s</sup>. And he calls our Salvation [*χάρις*] Grace or Favour<sup>t</sup>; and a free Gift<sup>u</sup>; and the gift of Grace; and the abounding of Grace<sup>x</sup>.

But Dr. *Clarke* says; It was no less truly and properly a free Gift of God, to appoint and to accept that Satisfaction; (*viz.* the Sufferings of *Christ*;) than it would have been, to have granted Remission, if he had so pleased, without any—Satisfaction at all<sup>v</sup>.

But can any one be said to be justified or forgiven *freely*; when a recompense and compensation is paid for the Justification? The transferring the Punishment from one person to an other, may be a free Act; but our *Justification* can not be *free*, unless the Sin is actually *forgiven*. For how can that be a free Gift, which is paid for? And what could be desired, by the severest Creditor; more than a payment of the Debt, by an exact and adequate Satisfaction? And can any Man believe; that the Grace of God, which St. *Paul* so highly magnifies, means no more than a Readiness to receive a full and adequate Payment and Satisfaction from a different person than the Sinner? Here is no appearance of any free Gift; or any sign of Mercy at all.

Dr. *Clarke* is strangely embarrassed on this question. He allows; that “the Satisfaction made by *Christ* was not by way of *exact equivalent*, which God was *bound* to accept; as in the case of one man’s paying a debt for an other. For in that case, he says, no acknowledgement was due to him to whom the debt is paid; but to him only who pays it. Neither could it with Truth be affirmed; that God forgives men’s sins *freely*, and out of *mere Grace* and Mercy; if Satisfaction were made for them in *that* Sense” Vol. I. 305. oct. l. 81. fol. But the question is not, whether he was *bound* to receive the Satisfaction, or not; But whether it was *actually made*, or not. If it was an

<sup>r</sup> The Word *ἀνεμίσση* is only used in the following places in the new Testament. *Mat.* x. 8. they hated me *without a cause*. *Rom.* iii. 24. being justified *freely* by his grace through the Redemption that is in *Christ Jesus* — *2 Cor.* xi. 7. I preach to you the Gospel *freely*; which the apostle explains by saying, he was chargeable to no man; in verse the 9th; and opposes it to his taking wages; in verse 8. *Gal.* xi. 21. If Righteousness came by the Law, then *Christ* is dead in vain. *Thess.* iii. 8. Neither have we eaten of any man’s labour, *for naught*. *Rev.* xxi. 6. I will give him of the water of Life, *freely*. xxii. 17. Let him take of the Water of Life, *freely*. See *Sykes’s Scrip. Doct.* p. 347.

<sup>s</sup> *Rom.* v. 21.

<sup>t</sup> *χάρισμα* *Rom.* v. 15.

<sup>u</sup> *ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι* ver. 15.

<sup>x</sup> *ἡ περισσειὰ τῆς χάριτος* ver. 17.

<sup>v</sup> Vol. II. p. 130. fol. Sermon. cxxxvi.

equivalent



Equivalent for the Debt due, and was actually *paid*; it follows as above, that no Acknowledgement was due to the person to whom it was paid: there could be no Grace or Favour in the Forgiveness; because there was no Forgiveness. And, if it was *not* an Equivalent to the Debt due; then an adequate Satisfaction was not required; and, if the Sin may be forgiven without an *adequate* Satisfaction, it may be forgiven without *any* Satisfaction at all. And it will not be necessary, that the honour of God's Laws should be vindicated; either by the Punishment of the Sinner, or by that of any innocent Person in his stead: but he may forgive the Sinner *freely*, in the sense in which St. Paul uses the Word; without any Payment, Satisfaction, or Recompense.

In short, if "the plain meaning of *Christ's* making Satisfaction for us, is, as Dr. Clarke says, that God was pleased freely to appoint, and freely to accept, and of his mere *Grace* and *Mercy* to be satisfied with what *Christ* did and suffered, in Vindication of the divine Justice and the honour of God's Laws and Government, and for the manifesting his irreconcilable hatred to Sin;" then I argue, as follows; If there was any Relaxation of Punishment in this Scheme, any Grace or Favour shewn, any thing short of an adequate Satisfaction—So far there was a Remission of Sin, [*ἀφεσις*] and, if any part of the Sin might be forgiven, without a Satisfaction; so might the *Whole*: And our Justification and Salvation may arise *entirely* from the Benevolence and Grace and Love of God to Man; and be the Gift of God, and the free Gift, in the *proper* Sense of the Words; as it is represented through the whole Scripture: and in truth, it was the sense of this infinite Goodness, that reconciled the World to God.

And here it must be observed; that the doctrine of our Salvation by the free Grace of God, doth not depend upon a few obscure Texts; as the notion of vicarious Punishment does: but the whole Scheme of Redemption by *Christ* is declared to be founded upon it; viz. that God by *Christ* hath reconciled the World to himself: not that *Christ*, by suffering the Punishment due to Man, hath reconciled God to the World; for the New Testament knows no such language; but that God reconciled the World to himself, (by) not

\* Clarke's serm. vol. I. p. 305, octavo. l. 81, fol. Serm. xiii.

imputing



imputing their trespasses to them<sup>\*</sup>. And therefore the Apostle says, God hath committed to us the ministry of Reconciliation. But observe the nature and process of this Reconciliation. "Now," says the Apostle, we are Ambassadors for *Christ*; as though God did beseech you, by us: we pray you in *Christ's* stead, be ye reconciled to God." The only Objection to our Reconciliation to God is our Sins. By our Sins we throw ourselves at a distance from him; and by Repentance and Amendment we approach him, and reconcile ourselves to him<sup>\*</sup>: and the Apostles, by preaching Peace, that is, Forgiveness, preached the doctrine of Reconciliation; and *Christ*, by forgiving our Sins, reconciled us to God; and God, by forgiving us by or through *Christ*, reconciled us to Himself: And We, by receiving the Lord for our God, according to the Revelation we received by *Christ*, reconcile ourselves to God by Him. And we must never forget; that the Salvation, which *Christ* brought, was the Salvation of God. *Luke* iii. 6. It was God, who appointed it, and sent it; and all that *Christ* did in the Redemption of Man, was in obedience to God who sent him; as he himself has declared in a hundred places. And he sent him to give Remission of Sins to all that would reconcile themselves to God, by repentance and amendment of Life. And God took this method of reconciling the World to himself; because he loved the World. And this is the Reason; that, when *Christ* was born, the Angels proclaimed, Glory to God in the Highest [or in Heaven], on Earth Peace or

<sup>\*</sup> II *Cor.* v. 18. 19. God is never said to be reconciled to the World; because he was never at enmity with the World, but always willing to be their benefactor, if they would return to their duty. It was the World, that was at enmity with God; and was to be reconciled by coming to the Knowledge of his Goodness to them. The same turn of Phrase was used by *Atticus* at his Mother's Funeral; when he boasted, *se nunquam cum matre in gratiam redisse*; that he was never reconciled to his Mother: it was, because he was never at variance with her. *Nepos, Vit. Att.*

<sup>\*</sup> *Simplicius* observes, that Repentance and Prayer ought to draw us nearer to God; and not God nearer to us: as in a Ship, by fastening a Cable to a firm Rock, we intend not to draw the Rock to the Ship; but the Ship to the Rock. And, as God is unchangeable, this is the only sense in which we can be said to approach him; or to depart from him: we approach him by Righteousness, and depart from him by Sin; but God is always the same. Thus *Is.* lix. 2. Your Iniquities have separated between you and your God: and your Sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. And consequently, we approach him by his setting our Sins as far from us, as the East is from the West. *Pf.* ciii. 12. *Sallust* the Philosopher speaks in the same manner, ch. xiv. Sed Diis quidem boni sunt semper, semper tantum benefici, noxii nunquam; semperque in omnibus eodem modo se habent. Nos vero, dum sumus boni, propter similitudinem Diis conjungimur; dum mali, propter dissimilitudinem ab iis separamur: et dum ex virtute vivimus, Diis adhaeremus; dum vitiis inquinamur, nobis illos hostes comparamus.

Forgive.



Forgiveness; or, what is the same thing, the manifestation of God's good will to men<sup>b</sup>. All this is plain and intelligible: but to assert, as some do; that the Death of Christ was a *Punishment*, which *he* underwent for *our* Sins; is a declaration, that our Sins are not forgiven at all; but only transferred, and the penalty paid by another Person: and a direct contradiction to every text in the new Testament, which speaks of the Goodness and Mercy of God in our Forgiveness. And therefore I conclude; that the *Christian* Religion is not founded upon the Wrath of God against the Sins of Men, requiring a *vicarious* Punishment; but upon the Benevolence and Love and Grace of God to the World, offering by his Son a free Pardon; without any Punishment or Recompense at all.

Dr. *Samuel Clarke* says, very piously and justly; "It may seem at first sight a pious extolling the Love of our Saviour, and the greatness of the Work he undertook—to describe the supreme Father and Creator of all things, as having no thoughts of Pity or Compassion towards his perishing Creatures; till moved thereto, as it were *against* his original intention, by the interposition of *Christ*—The coming of *Christ* was not the first cause of the Goodness and Love of God towards us; but the essential and eternal Goodness of God was the cause and reason of the coming of *Christ*.—Most unjustly therefore, and with great injury to Religion, is God sometimes represented as an implacable and cruel Judge; delighting in the destruction of Sinners, till they were taken as it were out of his hands by the interposition of *Christ*. This, I say, is a very injurious Representation of the great God and Father of Mercies<sup>c</sup>. Not only the Love of *Christ*, which is the *mediating* Cause; but the antecedent Love and essential Goodness of the Father Almighty, which is the *primary* and *original* Cause of their Salvation; is always in Scripture represented and laid before them, as a motive of Gratitude; and a principal Argument to excite in them suitable Returns of Love and Obedience to him<sup>d</sup>." And again, after several quotations from Scripture, he says: "These and numberless other, the like passages in Scripture, do sufficiently declare;—that the Salvation of Men by the coming of *Christ* is and ought to be ascribed *primarily* to the an-

<sup>b</sup> See *Jos. Mede's* sermon on Christmas-day.

<sup>c</sup> *Clarke's* sermons. vol. II. p. 117. 118 octavo. vol. I. serm. xxvii. p. 167, &c. fol.

<sup>d</sup> *Ibid.* p. 222. l. 168. fol.



tecedent Love and original essential Goodness of the Father Almighty<sup>e</sup>.

Mr. *James Foster*, in his very valuable answer to Mr. *Tindal*, says: "The New Testament no where represents God, as a rigorous and inexorable Being; who insisted upon full Satisfaction<sup>f</sup> for the Sins of Men; before he would be induced to offer terms of Reconciliation. It says indeed, not one word of *Satisfaction*, much less of a *strict* and *adequate* Satisfaction; not a Syllable of the *infinite* Evil of Sin; of *infinite* Justice; the *Hypostatical Union*, or the Deity's being so united to the Man *Christ Jesus*, as that the *two* infinitely distinct *Natures* constitute *one Person*; and by virtue of this Union giving an *infinite* value to the Sufferings of the human Nature, and enabling it to pay a *strict Equivalent* to God's offended *vindictive justice*. All this, I say, is the invention of modern ages; (who by subtle distinctions and metaphysical obscurities have deformed true *Christianity* to such a degree, that scarce any of its original features appear:) and bears not the least similitude with the Language of the New Testament; in which the divine Being is always described, as *slow to anger*, merciful and condescending to the frailties of Mankind: and forgiveness of Sin represented, not as a thing for which a price of equal Value was paid; and which might consequently be demanded, in strict Justice; but as a *voluntary* act of pure Favour, and the effect of free and undeserved Goodness<sup>g</sup>."

2. I shall now procede to shew the Method, by which Almighty God has carried-on the Salvation of Man; through all the several Dispensations, from the beginning of the World: either immediately by *Jesus Christ* under different names and characters; or mediately by his Angel or Angels.

As to the Fact itself, we are told; that it was by *him* that God made the Worlds; [*τὸς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν*] constituted or appointed the Ages or Dispensations; that is to say, by *him* God formerly dis-

<sup>e</sup> *Clarke's sermons*, vol. ii. p. 227.

<sup>f</sup> *Satisfaction* is a word never once used in Scripture. It was without doubt well pleasing to God, and in that sense a *Satisfaction* to him; that *Christ* loved us, and gave himself for us, as an offering and sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. *Eph. ii. 4.* and God manifested his good pleasure, in rewarding him for it. But *Punishment* is so far from a *Satisfaction* to him; that he calls it his *strange* work. *Is. xxviii. 21.* And the Punishment of an innocent Person must be an Abomination in his Sight: Nothing can be a *Satisfaction* to God, but Righteousness.

<sup>g</sup> *Foster against Tindal*, p. 330.



posed and ordered those eminent and remarkable Periods of time, the antediluvian, patriarchal and *Mosaic* ages; and now the present. This was the *πρόθεσις αἰώνων*, eternal purpose or disposition of ages, spoken of *Eph. iii. 2.* of which the Apostle again speaks *Heb. ix. 3.* through Faith we see, the ages were framed (*αἰῶνας καὶ ἡρώταται*) by the Word of God<sup>a</sup>. And, as the former ages were under him: so was the age to come, called *οἰκουμένη μελλεσα ὁ αἰὼν μέλλον*, *Heb. ii. 5.* to be under him; by which the Jews understood the age of the *Messiah*<sup>i</sup>; and accordingly he is called in the *Alexandrine* Ms. of the Lxx, the Father of the age to come; as hath been observed: at the end of which he shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, from whom he received it; that God may be all in all<sup>k</sup>.

In considering how these Ages or Periods of time have been conducted by Jesus Christ; I shall, first, give an account from the sacred History, in what manner He was engaged in promoting the Salvation of Man from the Creation till the end of the *Jewish* Oeconomy: and secondly, in what manner he afterwards carried on the same Scheme and Design, in the character of *Messiah*, the Son of Man.

First, I am to give an account, from the sacred History; in what manner Christ was engaged, in promoting the Salvation of Man; from the Creation till the End of the *Jewish* Oeconomy.

We are told by *Moses*; that, in the beginning, *Elohim* (by which word he sometimes means the Supreme *Jehovah*, and sometimes the Angel of *Jehovah*;) created the Heavens and the Earth. And the Christian Faith is this; that God created all things by *Jesus Christ*, (*Eph. ii. 9*) and that without the Word of God was not any thing made that was made: *Jo. i. 3.* *David* says; by the Word of *Jehovah* were the Heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth: (*Pf. xxxiii. 6*) which seems to be the same Doctrine. For, if it be objected; that *David* only mean'd, that the Heavens were made at his Command; which appears to be the sense of the Words, in *Gen. i. 6. 9.* where God says, Let there be Light; Let there be a Firmament; Let the Waters be gathered together; &c. the question will be, as *Irenæus* observes; to whom

<sup>a</sup> See *Sykes* on *Heb. i. 2.* and *xi. 3.*

<sup>i</sup> *Jf. ix. 6.* Lxx.

<sup>k</sup> *1 Cor. xv. 27.*



did God give the Commandment?" and the answer must certainly be, to the Person who immediately obeyed his Will: and who could that be, but the *Logos* or Word of God; to whom both Jews and Christians have ascribed it? And thus *Moses*, *David*, and the Apostles of Christ agree in the same Account.

As God created our first Parents by *Jesus Christ*<sup>1</sup>, so also did he judge them by Him. This Substitute or *Shechinah* of God made *Adam*; says A. Bp. *Tenison*<sup>m</sup>; and he that gave him his Being, gave him most probably the Law of it. It was the Voice of *Jehovah* walking in the garden in the cool of the day, that conversed with them and condemned them; and this Voice could be no other than the visible *Jehovah*, or *Word of God*<sup>n</sup>; according to the unanimous opinion of all the primitive Writers, that the *Elohim*, who is sometimes called the Angel of *Jehovah*, and sometimes *Jehovah*, was *Christ*<sup>o</sup>. And in pronouncing the Sentence upon the Tempter, he gave them the first hopes and comfortable assurance of his Mercy to them; by threatening that the Seed or Offspring of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's head: by which *Adam* and *Eve* were delivered from the fear of immediate Death; and assured, that the World would be continued in their Posterity; and that one of their Descendants would get an Advantage over the person that had deceived them.

This Prophecy of the *Messiah*, to be sure, is very obscure; and indirectly intimated; nor indeed is it spoken, as a promise to Man, but as a threat to the Serpent; or rather, as our Fathers understood it, to *Samael*, the Angel of Death; the unclean Spirit, with whom our Doctors suppose the Serpent to have been united<sup>p</sup>: and, whether our first Parents understood any thing more explicitly by it, we are not informed. The present time, when they were just about to receive the sentence of their own Condemnation; could not be a proper one to enlarge upon a Subject, which consisted merely of God's Grace and future Favours. The transition from their Sorrow and Shame to Joy and Hope, might have been too

<sup>1</sup> *Eph.* iii. 9. *Col.* i. 16.

<sup>m</sup> *Tenison* of Idolatry, p. 321.

<sup>n</sup> They heard the Voice of the Word of God, says *Onkelos*; and A. Bp. *Tenison* quotes *Hilary*, *Tertullian*, and *Theophilus Antiach.* to the same Purpose. Perhaps God then appeared in the form of a Man, as *Gen.* xviii. says *Piscator* and *Oleaster*. See *Poli Synops.* *Gen.* iii. 8. and the Words of *Theophilus*, Letter iii. p. 75.

<sup>o</sup> Reply to *Waterland's* Def. p. 177 and preced.

<sup>p</sup> See *Ainsworth* ad loc.

sudden;



sudden; and have prevented their proper Effects. It was sufficient for their present Comfort, that they were not to die immediately.

The History that follows after the birth of *Enos* the Son of *Seth*, about the Year 230, informs us; that the wickedness of Man became great in the Earth, and every imagination of his heart was only evil continually. And *Maimonides* says; the Sons of *Adam* introduced the Worship of the Stars, and Spheres, and Images<sup>q</sup>. And, by comparing *Gen.* iv. 26. with *Gen.* vi. 2. it appears; that the Sons of *Seth*, who had separated from the wicked; and called themselves by the name of *Jehovah*<sup>r</sup>, that is, the Servants of *Jehovah*, did afterwards mix with them again; and made intermarriages with the corrupted families. So that when *Jehovah* saw the earth, it was corrupt; for all Flesh had corrupted its way<sup>r</sup> upon the earth. And this wickedness became so great, in the sixteenth Century, in the days of *Noah*; that it repented *Jehovah*, that he had made Man; and it grieved him to the heart. So that, after having given warning by his preachers of Righteousness<sup>r</sup> for 120 Years, till eight persons only were left uncorrupted, he destroyed that obstinate and impenitent generation; just time enough to save one Family uncorrupted to instruct their Children in virtuous Principles, and the Worship of the one God: by this well-timed Severity, the Race of *Adam* was preserved a second time from Destruction; as by an act of Forbearance, in delaying the penalty of Death to our first Parents, it was preserved before.—And from the *Mosaic* account of this *Jehovah*, that the Sins of Mankind grieved him to the heart, agreeable to what is said of him in other parts of Scripture<sup>u</sup>; and from his making a Covenant with *Noah*, we have reason to conclude; that it was not the Supreme *Jehovah* in Person, but the Angel of the Covenant.

<sup>q</sup> See the quotation from *Selden*, Letter iii. p. 96.

<sup>r</sup> This is the meaning of *Exod.* v. 3. *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* and so it should be read in *Ex.* iii. 18. and not *יְהוָה*, the God of the Hebrews is called upon us. So it is rendered in both these places in the LXX, and in *Onkelas*, and in *Jerom's* Latin translation; and so We are called his People, *Ex.* vi. 3. *Dan.* ix. 9. *Ij.* lxiii. 9. *lxv.* 1. See *Bp. Lloyd* on *Daniel's* Weeks.

<sup>s</sup> This word signifies Worship, *Amos* viii. 14. *Pj.* lxvii. 2. or any Religion, Doctrine, Manners, Action, &c. *Essay on Spirit*, note, p. 62.—*Ainsworth* ad loc.

<sup>t</sup> *St. Peter* says, *1 Pet.* iii. 19. that it was Christ preach'd in the days of *Noah*, by the same Spirit which raised him from the dead: that is, by the Holy Ghost.

<sup>u</sup> *Ij.* lxiii. 9. *Jud.* x. 16. *Zeck.* ii. 8. *Acts* ix. 4.



After this all Men lived together in *Chaldæa*; till the days of *Peleg*, the fifth from *Noah*; when they divided the Earth between them. For *Jehovah* [that is, *Christ*, the *Jehovah* Angel] came down to see the City and Tower, which the children of Men builded; and, in order to restrain them from their undertaking, he confounded their Language; and scattered them abroad upon the face of all the Earth: and they left-off to build the City. So they spread themselves from *Babel* into the several Countries that fell to their shares; "carrying along with them the Laws, Customs and Religion, under which they had till those days been educated and governed by *Noah* and his Sons and Grandsons: and these Laws were handed down for the two succeeding Centuries to *Abraham*, *Melchisedek*, and *Job*; and *Job*'s friends appear to have been of the same Religion with himself.

But, about this time; that is, about 400 years after the Flood; as the memory of that severe Visitation gradually lost its influence on the Religion and Morals of mankind, the worship of Idols began to spread abroad in *Chaldæa* and other countries; the effects of which must in time have proved fatal to all true Religion: and therefore, to prevent this growing evil, God called *Abraham*, the friend of God, out of *Ur* of the *Chaldeans*, where Idolatry prevailed; in order to revele to him his Will, and keep-up in his Family the Knowledge and Worship of the One God, and preserve the His-

<sup>1</sup> *Gen. xi. 5-8.* *Novatian* argues from the words, let Us go down; that it could not be God the Father who came down; for his Essence is not circumscribed: nor yet an Angel; for it is said *Deut. xxxii. 8.* that the most high divided the Nations. It was therefore he that came down, of whom *St. Paul* saith; He that descended is he that ascended above all Heavens. The *Arabick* reads, the Angels came down; that is, the *Shechinah*. *Tenison* 324.

*Justin Martyr* says; "When God says, God went up from *Abraham*; the Lord spoke unto *Moses*, the Lord went down to see the Tower, &c." do not imagine, that the unbegotten God himself descended or ascended. For the unspeakable Father and Lord of all things, neither goes nor walks any where. Wherefore neither *Abraham*, nor *Isaac*, nor *Jacob*, nor any other Man ever saw Him, who is the Father and ineffable Lord of all things; even of *Christ* himself: But they saw Him, who by the Will of the Father is God, as being his Son; and an Angel, as ministering to his Will. *Dial. p. 110.*

<sup>2</sup> *Newton's Chronol. 187.* And *Bp. Lloyd* says; The History of the Creation, with this Prophecy (of the seed of the Woman) and afterwards the History of *Noah's* Flood was doubtless conveyed from age to age by unwritten Tradition. *Expof. of Daniel's Weeks, p. 22.* and from hence *Moses* might receive it, and commit it to Writing.

<sup>3</sup> *Gen. xi. 31.*

<sup>4</sup> The Faith which was delivered to the *Jews*, as the first Principle of their Religion, is thus expressed by *Moses*; *Deut. vi. 4.* Hear, O *Israel*; *Jehovah* our God, *Jehovah* is One. This is one of the four paragraphs, which our Fathers used to write upon their *Phylacteries*; and read twice a day. But this belief hath been long lost, in almost all the Nations of the World; who under some pretense or other generally hold that *Jehovah* is more than One.



tory of his Providence over Mankind from the beginning of the World, and the prophecies which related to future Events. So *Terah* took his Son *Abraham*, and *Lot* the Son of *Haran* his Son's Son, and *Sarah*, his daughter in Law, his Son *Abraham*'s wife; and they went forth with them from *Ur* of the *Chaldeans*, to go into the land of *Canaan*; and they came unto *Haran*, and dwelt there: and *Terah* died in *Haran*. And, when *Abraham* was 75 years old, God called him out of *Haran* in *Canaan*; in the reign of *Melchisedek*<sup>b</sup>, who was King of *Jebus*, afterwards called *Jerusalem*; and priest of the most high God; to whom *Abraham* voluntarily paid Tythes, and therefore he probably was of the same Religion.

At this time *Jehovah* made a Covenant with *Abraham* to be his God, and promised to make his Seed a mighty Nation, and to give them the land of *Canaan*, and that in his seed should all the families of the Earth be blessed<sup>c</sup>; thereby appropriating to the seed of *Abraham* those blessings, and that victory over the unclean Spirit, which was before promised to the seed of the Woman. This Covenant *Jehovah* made with *Abraham*, first personally at *Sichem*, by the name of *EL SHADDAI*; that is, God Almighty<sup>d</sup>; and did afterwards in the same name confirm it to his Son *Isaac*<sup>e</sup>, and after him to his son *Jacob*<sup>f</sup>, and after him to a nation that should come out of his loins<sup>g</sup>; and he chose his Family to be his portion and inheritance<sup>h</sup>; and the Reason given, why our Father *Abraham* was chosen from the rest of the world to prevent the spreading of Idolatry, was; because God knew, that he would command his children and his household after him; and they should keep the way<sup>i</sup> of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord might bring upon *Abraham* that which he had spoken of him<sup>k</sup>; viz. that he should make him a great nation, and bless all the families of the earth in his seed<sup>l</sup>; and accordingly he promises the *Israelites* to make good to them, by the name of *Jehovah*, all that he had promised to their Fathers, by the name of *El Shaddai*<sup>m</sup>: I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know, that I am *Jehovah* your God; that bring you from under the burthen of the *Egyptians*.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. xii. 4.

<sup>c</sup> xii. 1. xiii. 14. xvii. 1. xxviii. 3.

<sup>d</sup> xvii. 1.

<sup>e</sup> xxviii. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid. xxv. 11.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 12.

<sup>h</sup> Deut. xxxii. 8.

<sup>i</sup> See note<sup>1</sup> p. 59.

<sup>k</sup> Gen. xviii. 18. 19.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid. xii. 3. see Sykes on the Hebrews, Appendix Number 1.

<sup>m</sup> Exod. vi. 7.

This



This return from *Egypt* God had promised to *Abraham*, and confirmed it with an Oath<sup>a</sup>; and to this purpose overpowered the stubbornness of this generation of ignorant slaves, by such miracles as they were not able to withstand; and led them out by the hand of *Moses* into the wilderness, going before them by day in a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. And the more necessary was this Migration at that time, as the people were defiled with the Idols of *Egypt*; and would not hearken unto *Moses*, nor forsake the Idols of *Egypt*.

When *Abraham* left his Country, to avoid the Idolatry of the *Chaldeans*; he visited *Melchisedek*, King of *Jerusalem*; *Abimelech*, King of *Gerar*; and *Pharaoh*, King of *Egypt*; and all these were worshippers of the true God. But, while the *Egyptians* were in slavery, both *Egypt* and *Canaan* were corrupted with idolatry; and there was no other country to flee to, that had not imbibed the same errors. And indeed, the *Israelites* were now too numerous to think of residing under any other government; being sufficiently powerful to form a Kingdom of themselves: and accordingly the Angel, who had delivered them from *Egypt*, took them under his Protection in a particular manner; and became their God and King. He found them in a desert land, and in the waste howling Wilderness; he led them about, he instructed them, he kept them as the apple of his Eye. As an Eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange God with them. *Deut.* xxxii. 9. 10. 11. 12.

After this the same *Jehovah*, the Angel of the Covenant, made a covenant with *Moses*<sup>p</sup>; and did meet with him, and commune with him, and commanded, saying, Let them make me a Tabernacle, that I may dwell among them; and there I will meet with the children of *Israel*, and I will dwell among the children of *Israel*; and I will be their God; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God that brought them out of *Egypt*, that I may dwell among them; I am the Lord your God<sup>q</sup>. So the Tabernacle, which is called the habitation where the Lord God, or supreme *Jehovah*, chose to put his name<sup>r</sup>; and where his name, that is, the *Jehovah*

<sup>a</sup> *Gen.* xv. 14. *Deut.* vii. 8.

<sup>q</sup> *Ver.* 8. xxxix. 43. xxx. 36. *Lev.* x. 16. *Num.* vii. 89.

<sup>o</sup> *Ezek.* xx. 8.

<sup>p</sup> *Ex.* xxv. 22.

<sup>r</sup> *Deut.* xii. 5.

Angel,



Angel, was to dwell<sup>\*</sup>; was at the same time the Temple of our God, and the Palace of our King: And from thence he gave Answers to the Questions, which the high Priest asked him<sup>t</sup>: and residing among us personally, and sometimes visibly, he gave us written Laws of civil Government and religious Worship; fighting our Battles, as the Lord of Hosts; defending us and our Religion, and blessing us with fruitful Seasons and victory over our Enemies, as long as we continued to obey his Laws, and carry-on the History of his Revelations to succeeding Generations.

Thus the great business of the visible *Jehovah*, for many ages till his coming as the *Messiah*, was to keep-up among the *Jews* the practice of Righteousness, and the memory of God's Providence and Prophecy; till he should be born into the world, and thereby become the son of Man; in which character he was to introduce a more perfect Revelation, and make a new Covenant with the house of *Israel*<sup>u</sup>. Whereas, had the World been corrupted entirely with Idolatry before that time; the knowledge of the One God, and the history of his Providence and Supremacy and Superintendence over the affairs of Men, would have been entirely and irrecoverably lost; and the *Messiah* would neither have been expected, nor owned; nor any Signs have remained, by which he could have been known. Nay, had the World been corrupted so far, as to call down the wrath of God upon the whole Race of Man; the promise itself, that the *Messiah* should be born of the seed of the Woman, the seed of *Abraham* and *David*, must have failed of Completion; merely by the wickedness of Mankind: and, together with it, the blessings he was to bestow upon all the families of the earth.

But, when God absolutely determines an End, he at the same time determines that Means shall not be wanting to bring it about; so that no obstacles shall prevent it. As Means to this End, at one time the whole World was destroyed, except eight Persons; and at another time they were scattered abroad over the face of the Earth; that so universal a destruction might no more be necessary, to prevent the contagion of evil Principles: but the several Nations might be reformed, by delivering them for punishment into the hands of

<sup>\*</sup> *Deut. xii. 11. Ex. xxx. 45.*

<sup>t</sup> See the manner of this Converse, *Numb. vii. 89. Allix on the Jewish Church, 225.*

<sup>u</sup> *Jer. xxxi. 31.*



one another. And at length it was with the same end in view, that when Idolatry began to spread through all Nations, God chose a particular Family, among whom the Angel of his Presence tabernacled; and favoured them by him with a particular Revelation of all necessary Truth, which he propagated by their means through the several Nations of the World. And those who now hate and despise us, and are jealous of the peculiarity of God's favour to us; if they would but reflect, that the eternal Life of all Mankind depended upon the *Messiah*; and the Birth of the *Messiah* required the continuance of the *Abrahamic* line, and afterwards of the line of *David*; would confess it to be most worthy of the divine Providence in so particular a manner to preside over our Nation, for the benefit and salvation of the whole World; and to send us Prophets daily, rising up early and sending them; with promises of the highest Glory under him, when he should come to take upon him the Kingdom of *Israel*, and rule over all Nations; and the severest threats of ruin and destruction to those, who should refuse his Yoke; and to declare the Place of his birth, and the Time when they should expect him; that they might not be deficient in proper evidence of his Person, when he should appear among them to gather together again all Nations under one head, as their Lord and King; which had been so long separated from the *Israelites*, by the call of *Abraham*, and the Laws of *Moses*. And, as long as our People continued to practise Righteousness, and preserved the divine Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets faithfully, they were blessed with Prosperity; and, when they failed and followed other Gods, no nation was ever more severely punished\*. First, by *Shishbac*, or *Sesestris*, King of *Egypt*; then, by *Joash* King of *Israel*; then, by *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*; afterwards, the Temple was spoiled by *Vagores* Lieutenant to *Artaxerxes Ochus*, upon the dissension of the High Priests; then, the City was surprised by *Ptolemy Lagi*; then taken and profaned by *Antiochus Epiphanes*; then, taken by *Pompey*; afterwards, destroyed by *Titus*; again, besieged by the *Romans*, and destroyed by *Severus*, in the reign of *Adrian* in the year 136, upon the revolt under *Barcochab*, with 50 Castles, and 985 towns of *Judaea*. In the mean time the Theocracy became by degrees less conspicuous, and almost impracticable; as the People

\* *Jos. Mede*, 668.

became



became more and more corrupted, and unworthy of it. For when, by reason of their Sins, *Jehovah* turned their enemy and fought against them; [*Is. lxiii.*] they began to look-upon the Gods of their Enemies not only as more powerful in themselves, but more propitious to their Worshipers; than the *Jehovah* who dwelt between the *Cherubim*. Thus *Ahaz* sacrificed unto the Gods of *Damascus*, who smote him; and he said, because the Gods of the Kings of *Affyria* help Them, therefore will I sacrifice to Them; that they may help Me; [*2 Chron. xxviii. 23.*]; and upon this account they gradually neglected to inquire of the God of *Israel* and his Prophets: So that it was next to impossible to carry-on the Theocracy any longer. And accordingly we find, a little before the destruction of the City and Temple, *Ezekiel* saw the vision of the glory of God, or the *Shechinah*, pass from his seat in the Temple to the threshold of the house; [*ch. ix. 3.*] and from thence over the midst of the city, [*ix. 18. 19.*] and from thence to the mountain on the East. [*xi. 23.*] After this departure of the divine Presence, the Prophet saw the Temple forsaken, and the City destroyed, and the People carried into captivity. [*xxxiii. 21.*] After this he saw no more appearance of God, till their return from Captivity; when the Temple was rebuilt, and he return'd again from the same mountain; [*xliii. 2. 4. 5.*] and filled the house, as in *Solomon's* time *v.* At length, after various turns and changes, in which we were sometimes raised to the highest pitch of grandeur and power, and sometimes depressed to the lowest distress and slavery, and again restored as a body politic to our religion and government, our City new built, and a new Temple erected; we were left, after the *Babylonish* Captivity, to be governed entirely, in the last period of time before the *Messiah's* advent, by the written word of God: which we had opportunities of studying and understanding at that time, better than we ever had before; our Scriptures being read in the Synagogue every Sabbath-day, our inclination to Idolatry quite cured, and innumerable Scholes of polite Erudition erected under the *Maccabees*. And now the Spirit of Prophecy left us in the prophet *Malachi*, warning us to prepare by repentance and amendment of life for *Jehovah's* coming again to reside with us; that he might be a Blessing to us, and not a Curse. "Behold, says he, I will send my Messenger;

\* See *Jos. Mede*, 668.

† *1 Kings viii. 11* *Allix Jewish Church*, 247, 248.



and he shall prepare the way before me ; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the *Angel* of the *Covenant* whom ye delight in ; he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts." And again ; " Behold I will send you *Elijah* the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord : and he shall turn the heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the heart of the Children to the Fathers ; lest I come and smite the Earth, [that is, the land of *Judaea*,] with a Curse<sup>a</sup>."

These are the *last* words of the *last* of our Prophets ; and these being claimed by *Jesus Christ*<sup>a</sup> to refer to *John* the *Baptist* and himself, connect the *old* Revelation with the *new* one ; and prove the *Christian* Scheme to be only a continuance and farther completion of the original Design of God, to bring men to eternal Life by his Son, *Jesus Christ*, the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, and Lord of the Temple ; who was foretold by the Prophets, under the character of *Jehovah* ; who led our Fathers out of *Egypt*, that *He* should return and dwell with them, and make a new *Covenant* with them, and forgive their Iniquities, and remember their Sins no more<sup>b</sup>. It is the completion of this prophecy, that begins the *Christian* dispensation ; the Promise being literally fulfilled, when *Christ* appeared in the character of *Messiah*, the Son of Man and Prince of Peace ; and forgave the Sins of all that believed in him : and it will be more fully accomplished hereafter ; when he shall come to reign over all, and all *Israel* shall be saved ; as it is written—there shall come out of *Sion* the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from *Jacob* : for this is my *Covenant* unto them, when I take away their Sins<sup>c</sup> (that is, their Punishment). It is remarkable, that St. *Paul* quotes this passage with respect to a future time, when all Flesh, that is, the whole *Jewish* Nation, shall be saved<sup>d</sup> ; and consequently it reaches to the second coming of *Christ*, or the end of the Dispersion ; when that which is determined shall be poured upon the desolate<sup>e</sup>, (our unhappy Nation ;) and *Christ* shall appear to rule over all at the beginning of the (*αἰὼν μέλλον*) age to come, or age of the *Messiah*.

Thus through the whole history of our Nation, from the beginning till the coming of *Christ* ; the *Angel* of the *Covenant* hath presided over us, as the Lot of his Inheritance<sup>f</sup> : and it appears by

<sup>a</sup> *Mal.* iii. 1. iv. 5.

<sup>b</sup> *Mat.* xi. 10. *Mar.* i. 2. *Lu.* viii. 27.

<sup>c</sup> *Jer.* xxxi. 31. 34.

<sup>d</sup> *Ro.* xi. 25. 26. 27.

<sup>e</sup> *Ver.* 26.

<sup>f</sup> *Dan.* ix. 27.

<sup>g</sup> *Deut.* xxxii. 9.

the



the *Christian* prophecies, that he will *again* receive us into his favour upon our Conversion; and reign over us, even to the end of the world. But this return of the Theocracy will not be, till he hath proved his Sceptre to be a Sceptre of Righteousness; by punishing in a very exemplary manner the iniquity of our Nation, and shewing that his Love and Regard to them will not prevale with him to forgive their Transgressions, when they rebel against him, and vex his holy Spirit <sup>s</sup>.

2. I am now in the second place to consider; in what manner the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, when he came into the world in the Character of the Son of Man, did carry-on the same design of Man's Salvation; which he began at the Crëation, and had continued to the End of the *Jewish* Dispensation.

And here it must be observed; that the *Christian* Dispensation differs from the *Jewish*, in these remarkable circumstances; First, in the *gathering together again under one head* <sup>h</sup> (the *Messiah*) both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; preaching Peace and Forgiveness to all, who would receive Him and enter into his Church and Kingdom. Secondly, in the completion of numberless Prophecies, which had been given in the preceding ages from the time of *Adam*; and Thirdly, in that it gained to the *Messiah*, as the reward of his Obedience, that Kingdom or purchased Possession; which was prepared before the foundation of the World.

As the *Angel* of the *Covenant* had formed the *Jewish* Oeconomy, by separating *our* Nation from the rest of Mankind, that they might not fall into *their* Errors; and governing them by such Laws, as should continue that separation till the *Messiah's* advent; who was to give new Laws to them, and to the whole world: So, in the character of *Messiah*, he formed the *Christian* Oeconomy; by gathering together *again* all nations, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under *Christ* the one Shepherd and King over all; whose dominion was to be an everlasting dominion, never to be destroyed.

This Monarchy of the *Messiah* was the great point of view with all the Prophets, from the days of *Abraham*; and prophesied-of by *Jacob*, when he declares the Sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a

<sup>s</sup> *Is.* lxiii. 10.

<sup>h</sup> This ἀνακεφαλáωσις relates to the re-establishment of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* into the same condition they were in before their separation; as appears by the preposition ἀνά.



Lawgiver from between his Feet, till *Shiloh* come; and unto Him shall the *gathering* of the peoples (that is, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*) be†. And this *Gathering* was to be the beginning of the great Salvation, which was to be introduced by him; and is so called, in opposition to the *Jewish* Peculiarity; because it was to extend over all nations, and last to the End of Time. And this is the PREDESTINATION, spoken-of in the new Testament, as the gracious method of Salvation by Christ; when he should come in the Flesh: which was fixed and determined, according to the original design of God, to bring all the righteous to happiness by him, in the Kingdom which was prepared for them before the foundation of the world. For "this was the Mystery of *his* (God's) will; according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together [again] in one [or under one head] all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are in Earth; even in Him in whom also we have obtained an Inheritance, being predestinated (*προορισθέντες*) according to the purpose of his own Will<sup>i</sup>. A Mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of Men; as it is now reveled unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit: viz. *That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body*, and partakers of his (God's) promise in Christ by the Gospel<sup>k</sup>." Here we see the Apostle explains the Predestination he speaks-of, to mean the gathering of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* into one body *again*; which had been so long separated, by the call of *Abraham*, and the Law of *Moses*; and bringing them all under the same Revelation.

This then being the design of the *Christian* Revelation; that *Christ* might become a Light to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*; and his Salvation extend unto the ends of the earth; and that the *Gentiles* should come to his light, and Kings to the brightness of his rising; God sent him into the world, to publish the Laws of his Kingdom; which are the everlasting Laws of Righteousness and Truth; and to preach Repentance, and Remission of Sins, to all such as would receive them, and live in the practice of them. And according to the Prophecy of *Isaiab*, that he was formed from the Womb to be the Servant of God, to bring *Jacob* unto him, and to

† See Letter IV. p. 160.

<sup>i</sup> Eph. i. 10.

<sup>k</sup> Eph. iii. 5.



gather *Israel*<sup>1</sup>; he made the first offer of Salvation to his own People: being "a minister of the Circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers."<sup>2</sup> Therefore St. Peter says, ye are the children of the Prophets; and of the Covenant, which God made with our Fathers; saying unto *Abraham*, in thy seed shall all the Kingdoms of the earth be blessed: unto you first, God having raised up his son *Jesus*, sent him to bless you; in turning every one of you from his iniquities<sup>3</sup>: and *Christ* himself says; I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*<sup>4</sup>; and orders his Disciples neither to go into the way of the *Gentiles*, nor to enter into any city of the *Samaritans*; but to go to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*<sup>5</sup>. And, even after *Christ's* death, the Disciples for some time continued to preach to the *Jews* only: but seeing that they put it from them, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal Life, they turned to the *Gentiles*<sup>6</sup>. For so the Lord commanded them, saying; I have set thee to be a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayest be my Salvation unto the ends of the Earth<sup>7</sup>. And his orders to them after his resurrection were; Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations<sup>8</sup>. — So then the *Christian* Revelation was a continuation of the *Jewish* Revelation, and a completion of the promises given to our Fathers; and, if our Nation had received the *Messiah*, when he came to them; would have been carried on by the same Family of *Abraham*, and the nation of the *Israelites*. For he came to them, as to his Subjects; being at that time their King, as he declared himself to *Pilate*; and therefore he had a right to their obedience. "And those among the *Jews*, who believed on him, were the Society over which he actually ruled; and all those who join themselves to this Society, were his Subjects; or his Kingdom<sup>9</sup>." But, when he came to his own, and his own received him not, he turned to the *Gentiles*; he was found of them that sought him not; and said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by his name<sup>10</sup>. This then was the great business of the *Messiah*, under the *Christian*

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* xlix.<sup>2</sup> *Ro.* xv. 8.<sup>3</sup> *Acts* iii. 25.<sup>4</sup> *Mat.* xv. 24.<sup>5</sup> *Mat.* x. 5.<sup>6</sup> *Acts* xiii. 46.<sup>7</sup> *ver.* 49.<sup>8</sup> *Mat.* xxviii. 19.See *Whitby*, Vol. II. p. 727.<sup>9</sup> *Hoody's* answer to the dean of *Worcester*, p. 112. See also p. 109. [II. 854, and 855. fol.] where is explained *Col.* i. 13. St. Paul thanks God, for having delivered Christians out of that Society (the power of Darkness) to which they belonged before; and from the power of Death, which ruled over it; and brought them, or removed them into an other Society, over which his dear Son was truly King and Governor.<sup>10</sup> *Is.* lxi. 1.



Oeconomy; to collect together under one Lord, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and bring them to an obedience to the laws of his Kingdom. And as this Kingdom was to be extended over the whole world; and all people, nations and languages, were to serve him; it was absolutely necessary to put an end to those laws, by which our nation had been so long kept separate from others; and to introduce everlasting Righteousness; and govern his Kingdom, by the same Laws, by which the supreme God governs the Universe. And all such, as received the Laws of his Kingdom, became thereby the Subjects of his Kingdom. And as these Laws could only be received by Faith in *Christ*, or a belief that he came from God; it was upon the profession of this faith, that all their former sins were remitted. So that the moment they reconciled themselves to God, by receiving *Christ* for their King, and his Laws for the Rule of their Conduct; God did not withhold the free gift of Remission, because they had been formerly unfit, or because they might sin hereafter; but Forgiveness immediately follow'd their Faith, and could never after be forfeited but by Disobedience. But, if they do not endure unto the end, by an obedience to his precepts; they again separate themselves from God, and become again at enmity with him: and shall at the last day be cast out of his Kingdom; and be condemned with the wicked and impenitent of all other Religions: for this was the end, for which *Christ* gave himself for us; that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Thus the whole body of the *Christian* Church, whether they were *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are saved; or brought together into a state of Safety; by the preaching of peace and forgiveness: as was foretold by the Prophets. And this is the only *Predestination* spoken-of in the new Testament; though some of the *Christians* have deduced most absurd and unwarrantable Doctrines from it, by misunderstanding it. The word *Predestination* is mentioned, in the new Testament, only four times; twice in the eighth Chapter to the *Romans*, and twice in the first to the *Ephesians*:

\* *Dan.* ix. 24.

† *Mat.* viii. 12. xviii. 32.

‡ *Tit.* ii. 4.

• Thus *Noah* was saved in the Ark; and *St. Paul* received a Revelation, that no soul should perish in the Shipwreck. But this only mean'd, that they should have it in their power to be saved; not that they should be saved, whether they would or no: and so enduring to the end is as necessary for *Christians*, see *Acts* xxvii. 22. 31.

and



and in all these Texts relates to the bringing the *Gentiles* into the Church of God; and has never any other meaning.

The whole Process of the Salvation of obedient *Christians* by *Christ*, is thus briefly given us by St. Paul. [*Rom. viii.*] Whom God did *foreknow*<sup>b</sup>, (those Generations whom God did intend to favour as he did the *Jews*, with a design to give them his Revelations, and make them his Church) he also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of his Son; [designing that he should instruct them, and be an example to them, that they should follow his steps.] And whom he did *predestinate*, [that they should be enlighten'd with the *Christian* Revelation, and become his Church;] them he also *called*; [he *called* them all together, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, into his Church; gathering them under one head, thereby putting an end to the *Jewish* Peculiarity:] and whom he *called*, them he also *justified*<sup>c</sup>; [upon their obeying his Call, and becoming his Subjects, and joining themselves to him as his Disciples, he forgave them all their former Sins:] and lastly, whom he *justified*, them he also *glorified*. [All those, whose Sins were forgiven upon their first becoming *Christians*, he receives into Glory in his heavenly Kingdom.]

And here it must be observed; that the Apostle is not speaking, in this place, either of the Heathens who never heard of *Christ*; or of those *Jews* and Heathens who did not receive him, and obey his call; or of those who did not make their calling and election sure, by an obedience to his Laws; and enduring unto the End; but only of the method or process, by which those *Christians* who love God, are led on to Glory by him. For he gives this account, merely in order to prove and expound what he had advanced in the 28th verse; that "all things work together for good to those that love

<sup>b</sup> *Fore-know*] that is, *favour*. See *Amos* iii. 2. You only have I *known*; &c. and 1 *Cor.* xvi. 18. *Know* such; that is, shew Civility to them. *Hoadly's* answer to *Hare's* serm. p. 25.

<sup>c</sup> *Justified*] this word, as Mr. *Robert Barclay* observes, includes the whole between *calling* and *glorifying*. He quotes *Thylius*; that *Justification* seems to include *Sanctification*; and *Bullenger*; that in the Text, but ye are *washed*, *justified*, *sanctified*; the Apostle means the same thing in these several words: and *Chamierus*; that *Justification* and *Sanctification* do infer one another; yea, the Saints are for that reason called so; because they have received remission of Sins. *Barclay's* Apol. p. 220.

Mr. *Ainsworth* observes, on *Pf.* i. 1. that to make *just* or *justify*, is to *acquit* or *absolve* in judgement; *Pf.* lxxii. 3; and to make or pronounce *wicked*, is to *condemn*. *Pf.* xxxvii. 33. xciv. 21. *Deut.* xxv. 1. So that the objections of Mr. *Chubb* and others to St. Paul's Expression in the Epist. to the *Romans*, that many are made Sinners; procede from ignorance of the *Hebrew* Idiom. For the Sense of *δικαίνω*, see *Gataker* de Nov. Test. Stylo; in Indice.

God;



God; to them who are called according to his purpose; that is, to all obedient *Christians*: for those only can be said both to love God, and also to be called according to his purpose.

Here we see, the Peculiarity of *Election* and *Grace* (by which *Abraham* and his posterity were chosen, or elected by the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, to preserve the history of God's Providence, when the rest of the world is generally imagined to be left without any Revelation;) still continues in the *Christian Church*; and is open to all, that have opportunity and a desire to enter into it. The great advantage of this Revelation belongs entirely to the *Christians*, and is thus expressed by *St. Peter*; that God, having raised up his Son *Jesus*, sent him to bless them; [to whom he preached;] by turning away every one of them from their Iniquities. And *St. Paul* informs us; that the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation unto all Men, hath appeared [by *Jesus Christ*]; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World; looking for the blessed Hope and appearance of the Glory of the great God, and our Saviour *Jesus Christ*; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good Works. Thus the *Christians*, who were contemporary with *Christ*, and heard his Doctrine; were delivered out of the power of Darkness, into his marvellous Light; out of heathen Ignorance and Superstition, into the Knowledge of the true God. And thus far did *Christ*, in the character of a Prophet, carry on the scheme of Man's Salvation; by instructing them in Righteousness, and making them fit and meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light.

But the benefits received by the *Revelation* of *Christ*, and the benefits received by his *Mediation*, are very different things. The *Mediation* of *Christ* relates to all the families of the earth: but his *Revelation* extends only to the *Christians*; and, even among them, not one has ever obtained eternal Life; by the knowledge of it. The *Christian* Revelation could no more give Life, than the *Jewish* Law: no man is saved, as an adequate Reward of his perfect Righteousness, by means of either; but, as it was with the *Jew* and *Gentile*, when *Christ* came; so it is with the *Christian* now: Every one having broken

\* *Acts* iii. 26.

\* *Tim.* ii. 11.

\* See this farther explained in Letter VII.



the Law, must depend upon the Mercy and Power of the Lawgiver. The Resurrection from the dead, forgiveness of Sins and eternal Life in the Kingdom of God and his *Christ*, are Blessings derived to us from an other Cause, and by an other Medium: which I shall now procede to consider and explaine; by shewing,

Thirdly; that the *immediate* or *efficient* Cause, by which the Salvation of Man will be completed, will be the exercise of those powers which were conferred on *Christ* by the Father, in reward of his Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death. And this subject I shall explaine under these four heads—

First; that *Christ* came into the World, to do the Will of the Father.

Secondly; that, in obedience to the will of the Father, he underwent Sufferings and Death.

Thirdly; that, in Reward of his Obedience, he was highly exalted; and received very extraordinary Powers.

Fourthly; that We are saved by the exercise of those Powers, which He receiv'd in Reward of his meritorious Obedience.

First, I am to shew; that *Christ* came into the World, to do the Will of the Father. This very plainly appears, from the Testimony of *Christ* himself. He tells us, that he came not *of himself*; but the Father sent him: and neither the Words which he spake; nor the Works which he did, were *his*; but the Father's: for he did nothing *of himself*<sup>h</sup>; but, as the Father gave him commandment, so he did<sup>i</sup>; and gave his Disciples the words which God had given Him<sup>k</sup>: that he came in his Father's name<sup>l</sup>, and did his works in his name<sup>m</sup>; and sought not his own will, but the will of him that sent him<sup>n</sup>: and came down from Heaven, not to do his own will; but the will of him that sent him<sup>o</sup>: and it was his meat to do it, and to finish his work<sup>p</sup>; and he *did finish* it in such a manner, as to glorify God by

<sup>g</sup> Jo. xiv. 10, 24. <sup>h</sup> viii. 28. <sup>i</sup> xiv. 31. <sup>k</sup> xvii. 8. <sup>l</sup> v. 43. <sup>m</sup> x. 25. <sup>n</sup> xvii. 30.

<sup>o</sup> Jo. vi. 38. If the Gospel be examined without prejudice or ill-will, we shall always find; that *Christ* ascribes whatever he said or did to the Father, as the Author and principal Cause; and calls himself the Servant of God, referring all things to his glory. In the first place, he expressly declares; that he was sent by God: and besides, the Miracles which he did, he does not ascribe to Himself; but to the power given him by the Father. And so the Doctrine, &c. Therefore, when he requires Faith in himself, he never declares himself to be the supreme God; but the Messenger of the supreme God: and that the Faith in him does not terminate in *Him*; but in God, by whom he was sent. *Limborch. Amica Collatio*, p. 546, 547.

<sup>p</sup> Jo. iv. 34.



it<sup>a</sup>; and by obeying his commands to abide in his Love<sup>r</sup>. I must desire you to read the few chapters here quoted; and then to judge, fairly and impartially; whether those, who explaine-away all the meritorious obedience of *Christ*, by a pretended equality between *Christ*, and the God of *Christ*; are not as much blinded by their prejudices, as any people in the world ever were.

Secondly; In obedience to the will of the Father, *Christ* underwent Sufferings and Death.

*Isaiab* tells us; that he was formed from the Womb, to be the Servant of God; to bring *Jacob* unto him<sup>s</sup>; and yet, when he came into the World for that purpose, he was despised and rejected of Men; that it pleased God to bruise him, and put him to Grief; that he was cut-off from the land of the living, and poured-out his soul unto Death<sup>t</sup>. And from the New Testament we find this Prophecy exactly fulfilled: *viz.* that he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*<sup>u</sup>; and was a minister of the Circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the Fathers<sup>x</sup>; and came to redeem them that were under the Law<sup>y</sup>; and to bless them, by turning every one away from his iniquities<sup>z</sup>; and to this purpose he went through *Judea* and *Galilee*, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom in their cities<sup>a</sup>: for to that purpose he was sent<sup>b</sup>. And, in the faithful performance of this laborious work, he was continually subjected to the contradiction of Sinners; and was looked-upon as a Deceiver, and Impostor, and Sorcerer; and accused that he had a Devil, and did his Miracles by the Devil's power: and, what perhaps was spoken of him with as much malice, as any other blasphemy; he was called a *Samaritan*.

After some years spent in this manner, endeavouring in vain to gather into his Kingdom our unhappy Nation; he was not only rejected by the Elders, and chief Priests, and Scribes; but seized-on, as a Blasphemer and a Rebel, and delivered-up to the *Gentiles*: He was mocked, reviled, derided, and in the most contemptuous manner buffeted, spit-upon, and crowned with thorns: denied by his Friends, betrayed by a Disciple; condemned, upon the evidence of

<sup>a</sup> *Jo.* xvii. 4.

<sup>b</sup> *Ro.* xv. 8.

<sup>c</sup> *xv.* 10.

<sup>d</sup> *Gal.* iv. 4.

<sup>e</sup> *Is.* xlix.

<sup>f</sup> *Acts* iii. 26.

<sup>g</sup> *liii.*

<sup>h</sup> *Mat.* xi.

<sup>i</sup> *Mat.* xv. 24.

<sup>j</sup> *Luk.* iv. 43.



false Witnesses, and by the sentence of a Judge who believed him innocent, to die the ignominious death of a Slave and be crucified, in compliance with the clamours of that very people he was sent to save; even his own Subjects, whom he had so carefully watched over for many ages, as the Lot of his inheritance. And indeed, the greatest sufferings *he* underwent, seem to have arisen the evening before his death, from the sense of *their* wickedness and obstinacy; and the latter end which was preparing for *them*, in consequence of it. His own condemnation he bore with Patience and Silence, and had frequently spoken of it with great Fortitude and Resignation; but the Agony he felt in the garden was excessive; and, if the prophecy of *Isaiah* (ch. xlix.) relates to that part of his History; it seems to have arisen from a sense of the small Success of his Ministry, in gathering our unhappy nation into his church; and the ruin and destruction which his death by *their* hands would unavoidably bring upon *them*. This was an adequate subject for that vehemence of Prayer, which made him sweat as it were great drops of Blood; and use both Tears and Cries, when he offered up his supplications, *Heb. v. 7*. For his mind was so torn with the foresight of our miserable destruction; that he suffered in a very astonishing manner: and an Angel was sent from Heaven, to strengthen him and enable him to support it; by the assurance, that, although *Israel* was not gathered, yet the benefit of his ministry should extend to the ends of the earth. *Is. xlix. 6*.

All these Sufferings, and at last Death itself, were undertaken and completed; in compliance with the commands of God: and were indeed the foreseen and natural Consequences of his coming into the world, as the Son of Man; to reform the world, and fulfill the prophecies of bringing in a new and better Covenant; by which the

<sup>c</sup> It is remarkable; that, both in the prophecy of *Isaiah*, and in the Evangelists, this event is represented in the evening before the *Messiah's* death: when his Labour was over, and he had (according to all appearance) spent his Strength for naught. [*Lu. xxi. 1, 2*; *Is. xlix. 3, 4*.] In both of them He desponds: [*Mat. xxvi. 38*; *Lu. xxii. 44*; *Is. xlix. 4*.] And yet, notwithstanding this, he expresses his Faith and Resignation, and Readiness to go through with his Afflictions. [*Lu. xxii. 37, 44*; *Is. xlix. 4*.] And in both he receives an answer from God, to encourage and support him. [*Lu. xxii. 43*; *Is. xlix. 5*.] and St. *Paul* tells us, *Heb. v. 7*, he was heard *ἐπὶ τῆς ὑπακοῆς* upon account of his Reverence†; and his particular Reverence was expressed in those words of Resignation to the divine Will, *Not my will, but thine be done*. And he was heard; in that the Benefits of his death were extended to the end of the earth.

† See this sense of the word *ὑπακοῆς* *Socr. Eccles. Hist. l. xi. 38, Edit. Can. ab.*



pleasure of the Lord was to prosper in his hand: *Isa. lili. 10.* And therefore these Sufferings were to be amply rewarded.

Thirdly; the *Messiah*, upon account and in reward of his obedience and sufferings in performing the Will of God, was highly exalted; and received very extraordinary Powers.

The fundamental Prophecy of the *Christian* Religion is that of *Daniel*<sup>a</sup>; that "the Son of Man came in the clouds of Heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages shall serve him: his Dominion is an everlasting Dominion; and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed:" and, according to this prophecy, the angel *Gabriel* declares to the virgin *Mary*; "behold, thou shalt bring forth a Son; and he shall be great, and shall be called the son of the highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his Father *David*, and he shall reign over the house of *Jacob* for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end." But this Kingdom was not given to the *Messiah*, merely as a benevolent and arbitrary gift of an all-powerful Governor; but in a judicial manner, in reward of his meritorious obedience; as the award of a just and impartial Judge. It was, because the *Messiah* loved Righteousness and hated Iniquity; that his God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows; it was, because he was so much better than the Angels, that he obtained by inheritance a more excellent name than they; being constituted the Heir of all things<sup>c</sup>. It was for the suffering of Death, that he was crowned with Glory and Honour; says the Apostle<sup>d</sup>: as it was prophecy'd by *Isaiah*; therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors<sup>e</sup>. It was, because he was made a little while lower than the Angels, that all things were put in subjection under his feet<sup>f</sup>; and *Christ* himself saith, as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him Authority to execute Judgement also, because he is the Son of Man<sup>g</sup>: that is, because he came into the world in that character spoken-of by

<sup>a</sup> *Dan. vii. 13, 14.*

<sup>b</sup> *Heb. ii. 8.*

<sup>c</sup> *Luk. i. 32, 33.*

<sup>d</sup> *Jf. liii.*

<sup>e</sup> *Heb. i. 9.*

<sup>f</sup> *Heb. ii. 7, 8.*

<sup>g</sup> *i. 2, 4.*

<sup>h</sup> *Jo. v. 26, 27.*



the Prophets, and undertook to go through such humiliation and affliction, as they had foretold; in obedience to God who sent him. And the Apostle says, he made himself of no Reputation; (*ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν*) he emptyed himself of that Glory which he had with God before the world was<sup>m</sup>, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Man; (who was before in *Shechinah*, *ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ*, in the form of God<sup>n</sup>;) and being formed in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death; even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, that is above every name; that in the name of *Jesus* every Knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every Tongue should confess, that *Jesus Christ* is Lord; to the glory of God the Father<sup>o</sup>. And upon this throne of *David* he shall reign, till he delivers up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, from whom he receiv'd it; when he shall have put-down all authority and power, that opposes it: for he must reign, till he hath put all things under his feet<sup>p</sup>.

But the chief part of his Reward, in which Mankind is most immediately concern'd, is this; that God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to *Israel*, and remission of Sins<sup>q</sup>; to be the Lord of quick and dead<sup>r</sup>; to have life in himself<sup>s</sup>, and to quicken whom he will<sup>t</sup>; and to give eternal Life<sup>u</sup>; and power to become the sons of God<sup>v</sup>, and partakers with him in his Kingdom<sup>w</sup>. It is manifest, these Powers were part of his Reward; because they are considered as the motives and reasons of his Sufferings: for to this end *Christ* both died and rose and revived; that he might be Lord both of the dead and living<sup>x</sup>; and God appointed us to obtain Salvation by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who died for us; that, whether we wake or sleep, we might live together with him<sup>y</sup>. And therefore He is said to have bought Us with a Price<sup>b</sup>; and We are said to be purchased with His blood<sup>c</sup>. And the Salvation of the World appears to have been the Joy that was set before him; for which he endured the Cross, despising the Shame<sup>d</sup>. For this is the consolation given him by God, as I observed; when he is represented

<sup>m</sup> *Jo. xvii. 5.*

<sup>n</sup> *Act. v. 31.*

<sup>o</sup> *Jo. xvii. 2.*

<sup>p</sup> *1 Th. v. 10.*

<sup>q</sup> *Phil. ii. 6.*

<sup>r</sup> *x. 42.*

<sup>s</sup> *i. 12.*

<sup>t</sup> *1 Cor. vi. 20. vii. 23.*

<sup>u</sup> *Jer. 7.*

<sup>v</sup> *Jo. v. 26.*

<sup>w</sup> *Col. i. 12.*

<sup>x</sup> *Act. xx. 28.*

<sup>y</sup> *1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.*

<sup>b</sup> *v. 24.*

<sup>c</sup> *Ro. xiv. 9.*

<sup>d</sup> *Heb. xii. 3.*



by the prophet *Isaiah*, in a desponding manner complaining, because he had gotten so few Converts. "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught; but the Lord said, though *Israel* be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord; and my God shall be my strength: and he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my Servant to raise-up the tribes of *Jacob*, and to restore the preserved of *Israel*: I will also give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*; that thou mayst be my Salvation unto the ends of the earth." The prospect therefore, that in him should all the families of the Earth be blessed; which was the pleasure of the Lord, that was to prosper in his hand; was considered by him as a Motive for his undergoing such a state of humiliation and affliction: and his Glory and power of conferring happiness was the Reward of it.

Fourthly; I am now in the last place to shew, that We are saved by the exercise of those Powers, which *Christ* received in reward of his meritorious Obedience.

I have already observed, in my *fifth* Letter; that our first Parents were not only subjected to Death, but condemned to it, by God; as a judicial Punishment for Sin: and, consequently, no Being in the universe could have any right to restore them to Life; without His permission.

The Powers therefore, which were necessary to constitute *Christ* a Saviour, and bring Mankind to eternal Life and Happiness by him; were these—

First, the Power of raising the Dead:

Secondly, the Power of forgiving Sin:

Thirdly, the Power of giving Eternal Life—all which he received in reward of his obedience, when he became the Son of Man.

First, he had power given him to raise the Dead. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; so the Son quickeneth whom he will\*. By this means *Adam* and all his Posterity, are reinstated in that capacity of being judged and rewarded at the last day; which they would have been in, had *Adam* never sinned; nor themselves. This Redemption from Death extends to all Men; as in *Adam*, all die; so in *Christ*, shall all be made

\* *Is.* xlix. 6. *Lu.* xi. 32. † *Is.* liii. 10. ‡ *Jo.* v. 21.



alive<sup>b</sup>: and this requires neither Faith, nor Works, nor any condition whatever, towards the obtaining it; but comprehends both good and bad. This Redemption from Death is the first step to our Salvation; and the necessary link in the chain, which joins the *present* to the *future* state; and extends to the recovery of what was lost by the sin of *Adam*; but it extends no farther: upon which account it may be justly asked; what will this Redemption avail us, at the day of Judgement? or what will be the advantage of a Redemption from Death; if, notwithstanding the benefits of a Revelation, in *many* things we offend *all*<sup>i</sup>; and our Sins must therefore condemn us to a second Death? —

Secondly, It was necessary therefore; that *Christ*, in order to become a Saviour, should be endowed also with the Power to forgive Sin. And this goes on farther towards our Salvation, than merely a Resurrection from the dead; and is called, by *St. Paul*, the abounding of the free gift of God: that is, it is not limited by any analogy to *Adam's* offense: for it is not confined to *one* offense, but extends to *many* offenses, unto Justification and Forgiveness<sup>k</sup>. This χάρισμα or free Gift was absolutely necessary to our Salvation; because without it we should be in no safer a condition, as to *eternal* Life; than we were before *Christ* came. And therefore when *Christ* came in the character of a Saviour, to gather both *Jews* and *Gentiles* into his Kingdom as a place of safety; he forgave the sins of all those who became his Subjects. For God raised him to be a Prince and a Saviour; to give Repentance to *Israel*, and Remission of Sins<sup>l</sup>: and therefore Repentance and Remission of Sins were preached in his name among all Nations, beginning at *Jerusalem*<sup>m</sup>; as was foretold by the Prophets<sup>n</sup>.

But the forgiveness of Sins to those particular Persons among whom *Christ* lived and preached, reached but to a very small part of Mankind; and fell far short of accomplishing the promise which was made to *Abraham*; that in his seed should *all the families of the earth be blessed*: and much more so, when we consider the many Sins which the best *Christians* were guilty of after such Remission. And therefore,

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. xv.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 22.

<sup>k</sup> Ro. v. 15, 16, 17.

<sup>l</sup> Acts v. 31.

<sup>m</sup> Luk. xxiv. 47.

<sup>n</sup> Acts x. 43.

<sup>o</sup> Jer. xxxi. 34.

<sup>p</sup> Dan. ix. 14, Is. liii. 12, &c.

Thirdly,



Thirdly, what completed the character of *Christ*, as the Saviour of the World; and enabled him to perform this Promise, made to our Fathers; was the Power he receiv'd, of judging all Men at the last day; and giving eternal Life. For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all judgement to the Son; and given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as He (the Father) hath given him<sup>r</sup>; that is, to all such as upon their future judgement shall be declared to be righteous; and placed at the right hand of the son of Man<sup>s</sup>.

Now all these things; raising the Dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal Life, are acts of *Power*; and of that very Power, which *Christ* receiv'd in reward of his meritorious Obedience; to enable him to complete our Salvation. And it is upon this account, that the Gospel is said to be the Power of God unto Salvation; and *Christ* is said to be anointed with Power<sup>r</sup>. For though he gained his Power, and entered into his Glory, by a State of Humility and Sufferings; for which he was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour: yet he saves us, as a Conqueror over Sin and Death<sup>s</sup>; by destroying him, that hath the power of Death; that is, the Devil<sup>r</sup>: (called the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Prince of this World, and the God of this World<sup>n</sup>.) And he saves us in his royal Character, or that of a King; by giving us an inheritance in his Kingdom: and accordingly he is represented by *Daniel*, as receiving a Kingdom from the ancient of Days<sup>s</sup>; and by the Evangelists, as sitting upon the Throne of *David*<sup>s</sup>: and as coming in the Glory of the Father, or in *Shechinah*, as in former days; dispensing Eternal Life to whom he will, and destroying his Enemies with the brightness of his Coming. By all which it appears; that our Salvation is to be completed by Power<sup>r</sup>.

Thus we see; in what manner *Jesus Christ*, the Angel of the Covenant, has been employ'd from the Beginning; in bringing all

<sup>r</sup> *Jo.* xvii. 2.

<sup>s</sup> *Mat.* xxiv. 31, 33.

<sup>r</sup> *Acts* x. 38.

<sup>r</sup> *1 Cor.* xv. 54, 55.

<sup>r</sup> *Heb.* ii. 14.

<sup>r</sup> *2 Cor.* iv. 4. *Eph.* ii. 2.

<sup>r</sup> *Dan.* vii. 14.

<sup>r</sup> *Lu.* i. 27.

<sup>r</sup> This account of our Salvation, by Power which *Christ* gained in reward of his Obedience, answers two very capital Objections of the Deists; Since God, say they, was *always* willing that all men should be saved by *Christ*; why was not his Revelation made *sooner*? and why was it not *universal*? And again; If *Christ* was sent into the world, to reform it; how comes it, that his Revelation has not that effect? and what Good has it, if *Christians* are as bad as other Men? For the answer to these Questions I refer the Reader to Letter VII.



good Men to Happiness in that Kingdom, which he was about to purchase by his Righteousness; acting all along, according to the different circumstances of Mankind, sometimes as an Angel, and sometimes as a Man; sometimes revealing the Will of God by his Prophets, sometimes by his Angel, and sometimes by Himself in Person: At one time, forming a System of Laws to preserve the Jewish nation separate from the rest; at another time, gathering together again both Jews and Gentiles under Himself, as their Lord and King; and giving them Laws, more fully adapted to his Universal Monarchy: divesting himself of his natural Glory in Heaven, and humbling himself to appear among us as the Son of Man; refusing, for our sakes, neither Affliction, Contumely, nor Death: thereby gaining, in reward of his Benevolence, and Obedience, and Virtues of every kind, those powers, which were necessary to complete the character of a Saviour, and bring his faithful Subjects to eternal Life. — But here we must observe, that the Powers of Christ were the Rewards of his Merit; but the Blessings he bestowed on Mankind were not the Rewards of our Merit, but free Gifts. There is no doubt; but that, in the general method of God's Providence in the government of moral agents, as the Patron of Righteousness, and Judge of all the earth, the great Law must be, that Glory and Happiness shall be the reward of personal Merit; and thus the glory which Christ received was the proper Reward of his meritorious Obedience. But this is not the case with Men. They do not receive eternal Life, as the adequate reward of their Merit; but as the free Gift of an allpowerful and benevolent Creator and Benefactor; from which none are excluded, but those who are unfit to receive it. And farther than this the Mercy of God can not be conceiv'd to go, in the Salvation of Men; without mixing the good and bad together in the Kingdom of Christ; which would render it a place of unhappiness.

From the whole we see: 1. that the Salvation of Man, and the whole Scheme of Christianity, is founded upon the Benevolence and Love of God; by which he was moved to send his Son into the World, with the offer of free pardon and forgiveness to all that would receive him, and become his Subjects; and to give him up to Death for our Sakes.

Rev. i. i.

M

2. That



2. That it is carried-on by the Benevolence and Love of *Christ*; who gave himself for us, that he might bring us to Virtue and Happiness. It is impossible to conceive a greater instance of Benevolence and Love, than his Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death; in order to become *mighty to save*: or a greater Reward, than he received; which was the *Power to save*. A Reward, which could be perfectly enjoy'd by none; except a Person of the highest moral Excellence.

3. As the *Christian* Religion is founded on the Love of God, and carried-on by the Love of *Christ*; it is completed by the Love of Man to God and to *Christ*, and to one another. "In this is our Love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of Judgement; because as He, that is, *Christ* was, so are We in this World." In short, the great end of the *Christian* Revelation is to make us all *one* with God and *Christ*; that we may learn to act upon the same Principles of Benevolence and Love, and thereby pursue in a consistent manner, as They do, the Perfection and Happiness of the Universe: for the Sum of all perfection in rational beings consists, as I have before observed, in unity of will and design with God; who is infinitely wise, and just, and good. From all this it appears to Me; that the *Christian* Religion is the most glorious and interesting Scheme that can possibly be conceived, for the advancement of Virtue and Happiness; and worthy of all acceptance: and therefore I not only find my self oblig'd to receive it, and practise its Laws; but to recommend it to my Friends also: and particularly to yourself, whom I so greatly love and esteem.

It may perhaps after all be objected; that God is declared in the *Christian* Scriptures to be our Creator and Redeemer, and Saviour, and Justifier. And, if so, what need was there of any other Saviour, than God himself? what need was there, that *Christ* should suffer upon this account; or any other Person? why does not God elect and justify, and glorify, by his own immediate act?

I answer; because it was not the design of God merely that good men should receive eternal Happiness; but that this gift should be conferred upon them in the wisest manner, and have the greatest effect among Men and Angels; in promoting the Honour, that is, the most worthy Sentiments, of God; and the cause of Righteousness. For God does not govern the World by independent, unconnected,



and arbitrary acts of Power; but by a consistent Scheme of order and dependency of the parts; and the Redemption of Man is part of the great Design; and tends to promote the natural Happiness and moral Perfection of the whole: and God carries on this end and design, by the operation of his Creatures, so; that not only every Man in the world, But every Being in the Universe is employed; every one has some end in view, and some business to do; and the whole Universe is kept in action. Whereas to suppose, that God should by his own immediate act, bring about every event that he has decreed; is to leave no room for the actions of any other Being in the Universe. God *might*, no doubt, if he had pleased, have reveled his Will to mankind; without the intervention of the ancient Prophets: but where then had been the Office, Trial, and Reward of the Prophets? God *might* have created all Men, without the intervention of Parents; but where then had been the beneficial Connection between the Parents and Children? God does not act in so unconnected and short-sighted a manner; but makes one Cause serve several Purposes, by its various uses and connections.

In human works, though labour'd on with pain,

A thousand Movements scarce one Purpose gain;

In God's, one single does its End produce;

Yet serves to second too some other Use.

Pope, Ep. i. l. 54.

Of these connections, and the uses that arise from them, we frequently know nothing; and, when that is the case, our objections are mere Ignorance and Folly: but thus far we do know; that the Prophets had a Trial to go through, or a Duty to perform, and a Character to maintain; as well as the people they were sent to: that mankind were not only to be created, but created in such circumstances, as to employ and improve the virtues both of the children and parents; and connect the world in ties of relation and benevolence. And our Redemption was not confined in its consequences to the benefits of the Redeemed only; but extended to the Exaltation and Glory of the Redeemer, and to other uses.

'Tis certain; God can, if he pleases, bring about his decrees merely by his own immediate act and power: but where, and when, do we find this to be the method of his Providence?—When do we see his immediate hand in the establishment of Kingdoms, and the destruction of Armies? On the contrary, if he would destroy a nation,



nation, he raises up a *Pul* or a *Nebuchadnezzar*; if he would deliver it, he raises up a *Cyrus*; if he would shew his power in the punishment of obstinate Infidelity, he raises up into a conspicuous station a *Pharaoh*: but it never appears, in the old or new Testament; that the supreme God, whom no eye hath seen or can see, ever acted personally in the affairs of Men, by his own immediate power; but as he made all things by his Son, so he performs all things by Him; or by some Angel who executes His commands\*. And the Reason, why God always chooses to employ the actions of other beings, seems to be this; that by considering and executing his commands, they may improve their moral characters; and thereby recommend themselves to his Favour†. And, if this be the case, we see the necessity of our Redemption's being effected by the mediation of a Saviour.

If it be asked; what necessity there was for the Sufferings and Death of a Mediator, in order to his becoming a Saviour; it may be answered, in general; that they were manifestly necessary to many great and excellent purposes. But whether they were so absolutely necessary, that he could not have been a Saviour without them; (by receiving the Power of raising the Dead, forgiving Sins, and giving eternal Life) even though the *Jews* had received him as their Lord and King; is what we have not any evidence from Scripture to assert. If it be said, that they were necessary to fulfil the Prophecies; this is not a necessity in order to his becoming a Saviour, but in order to his fulfilling the Prophecies; and therefore is not the Subject of the present inquiry: for, if the *Jews* would have received him as their King, they would not have slain him; and, if they would not have slain him, these Prophecies would not have been given.

Let us examine what light we can find in the Scripture, in answer to this question. The end, for which *Christ* came, was in general to do the Will of the Father; and to finish his Work. He was to make a new Covenant with the house of *Israel*, and to gather *Jacob*; and to reconcile the World to God. And, if our nation would

\* Col. i. 15. Jo vi. 46. Heb. xi. 27. Jo. iv. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 16.

† See Letter II. p. 2. Notes.

† In which sense it is, that *Christ* asserts; therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I may take it again. Jo. x. 17.

have



have received him for *Messiah* the Prince, and been gathered to him; it does not appear, from any thing in the new Testament, but that the end of his Mission would have been accomplished; without his Sufferings and Death: for they would not have slain him, if they had listened to the voice of the Prophets; and known the day of their Visitation. And *Christ* himself, in his prayer the evening before his death, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" seems to consider it in this light: viz. that it might be possible for him to be the Saviour of the World, without his being slain by the *Jews*: for, in any other sense, if his death was absolutely necessary to his completing that Office, he must seem to express a desire of abandoning it; which is highly absurd to suppose. And this sense of the words is confirmed by an other prayer; in which he considers the work he came to do, as already finished; before his Death. "I have glorified Thee on Earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do: and now, O Father, glorify me, &c." The Death of *Christ* therefore seems to have been rather necessary, in attestation to his divine Mission; as being the faithful Witness to the Doctrines, which he preached to a sinful generation; and to manifest the Love of God to the World; in giving him up for us all, and other consequences of it; than any way necessary *a priori*, in the nature of the thing; as if his Death had been absolutely necessary to constitute him a Saviour and Redeemer, whether the *Jews* had received him as their *Messiah* and King, or not.

Mr. Foster says, "the Death of *Christ* was undoubtedly predetermined by God; but that does not prove, that it did not happen in the natural course of things: that is, in the same Manner, and by the same kind of Instruments, as the death of other Prophets and righteous men, who have preached Repentance and Amendment to an ignorant and degenerate age." And in another place he says; "his Suffering was the natural consequence of attempting to reform the manners of a degenerate age, and opposing the superstition and darling prejudices of the *Jewish* nation; and could not be avoided, but by such a compliance on his part; as would have been inconsistent with Virtue and Integrity: or by a miraculous interposition of Providence".

\* Rev. i. 5. iii. 14.

\* Foster against Tindal, p. 332, and 364.



It is certain, says Mr. *Emlyn*<sup>f</sup>; that God never did appoint and order the *Jews* to shed *Christ's* blood: but, on the contrary, forbade them to kill him. When he sent him among them, it was to turn them from their Sins; and the end he proposed was this, *Surely they will reverence my Son.* And therefore to shew how they acted against his Will; God censures those hands, as *wicked*, that killed him, and punished them with the most dreadful but illustrious Vengeance. *Mat. xxii. 37. Acts ii. 23.* If God had *commanded* the *Jews* to slay him; it might have looked as if his Death had been so *necessary*; that his office of a Saviour could not have been executed, without it: whereas by a bare *permission*, it was made to look like an *accidental* thing; done contrary to his Orders. And indeed, to suppose it *necessary* that the *Jews* should slay *him* in order to bring about *their own* Salvation, and reconcile themselves to God; seems to require, that in order to gain forgiveness for their past Sins they must necessarily perpetrate an other, of much deeper guilt than what they had before committed: And to suppose this to be any otherwise determined by God, than any other wicked action which he foretells; is inconsistent with his Attributes.

But though the Sufferings and Death of Christ do not appear to have been so absolutely *necessary* to our Salvation, that he could not have been a Saviour without them; even though *Israel* had receiv'd him as their *Messiah* and King: Yet, as this was not the case, but on the contrary his Death became the necessary consequence of his Ministry; the Beauty and Consistency of the divine Oeconomy in suffering him to be slain, is very evident; if we consider the consequence of it: and particularly that it was by this extraordinary act of Benevolence in giving himself for us all, that the World was to be reconciled to God.

In like manner; though we do not see *a priori* the necessity, that Mankind should be saved by one of their own Race; that, as by *Man* came *Death*, so also by *Man* should come the *Resurrection* of the dead; which St. *Paul* speaks of as a matter of great Propriety:

<sup>f</sup> *Emlyn's* Tracts, Examin. of Mr. *Leslie's* last dial. p. 254. He observes; that the text, *Acts* iv. 27. 28. may be more properly translated thus: Both *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate* were gathered together against thy holy Child *Jesus*, whom thou hast anointed to do what thy hand and counsel determined to be done.

1 Cor. xv. 21. *Heb.* ii. 14. See Letter V. p. 11.



yet this also, when considered *a posteriori*, in its Consequences, will appear to be no less beautifully connected with our Salvation; as a Mean and Motive to that End:—whether we consider him as our *Exemple*; increasing in Wisdom, as he increased in Stature<sup>b</sup>; and living without Sin, though in the likeness of sinful Flesh<sup>i</sup>; and learning Obedience, by the things which he suffered<sup>k</sup>; and becoming perfect by Sufferings, that he might become the Captain of our Salvation, and lead many sons unto glory<sup>l</sup>;—or whether we consider him as our *Judge*; touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and in all points tempted as we are:—or whether we consider his becoming a Man, only as analogous to the general method of Providence, that Mankind should be helpful to one another; and the Virtues of Particulars bring down Blessings upon the Community:—or as necessary in order to give Evidence to his Mission, as the faithful Witness even to Death raised up by God in attestation to his Doctrine;—in whatever manner we consider these things, the Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death of *Christ* appear to be necessary to our Salvation; in the same sense, as his whole Life and every part of his Conduct among us were necessary: that is, each Action was necessary to some particular purpose, by which God designed to bring-about our Salvation; and the whole together necessary to complete all the purposes, that is, the whole Design, in that particular manner.—Give me leave to observe here upon the whole; what an amazing Idea we must have of the infinite Power and Wisdom of God; and what a demonstrable Proof of the infinite Folly and Impotency of Sin: when we reflect, that so unpardonable an act of Wickedness as the crucifying the *Messiah* should be

Luke ii. 52.

Rom. viii. 3. By what St. Paul says here, that in the likeness of sinful Flesh *Christ* condemned Sin in the Flesh, I understand him to mean; That *Christ* did prove Sin committed in the Flesh to be the proper Subject of Condemnation, by shewing that it was not the unavoidable Consequence, of a Life in the Flesh: and this he shewed; by taking Flesh upon himself, and yet remaining free from Sin. Heb. iv. 15. — This was the opinion of *Clement Alexandrinus*: viz. that *Christ* assumed Flesh, thereby to demonstrate unto Men their sufficient Power to obey the Commandments. See Gale's Court of the Gent. part iii. p. 131. The Phoenix, Vol. ii. No. 22. Brevis Disquisitio, ch. x. p. 337.

Heb. v. 8.

Heb. ii. 10.

directed



directed by Almighty God to so great and glorious a *Catastrophe*, as the salvation of the World—If this be the case; how can we imagine it possible, that the Sin of Men, or of any Beings superior to Men, should ever be able to counteract his Designs! They may indeed produce a greater Intricacy in the Conduct of Providence; and such as may be beyond the finite Capacity of any Creature to investigate, because more complex; but the decrees of God will be equally accomplished, whatever means he pleases to make use of.

But here we are entangled for a few moments by an objection of the *Sacnians*; with regard to the benefit of *Christ's* example. If *Christ*, say they, had not been a *mere Man*, but of a superior nature; he could not properly be proposed as an Example to *mere Men*. His Powers would be so greatly superior to his Temptations, that the *Weakness* of the Flesh would be absorbed in the Divinity; and the Remembrance of his former Glory being ever present to him, his Temptations could have no power over him: And therefore he can neither be a proper Example to us, by his Victory over Sin, to labour after Righteousness; which he preserved without any labour; nor an Encouragement to imitate a Character, which we must despair of attaining to.

To this it may be answered; that, when *Christ* is said to be an Example to us, it means; either that he was a Warning, Admonition, or Lesson of instruction, to follow his Steps and receive his Reward; or else that he was a Copy for us to imitate, with the same Hopes in view.

Let us first consider; whether *Christ*, the Angel of the Covenant, be not a more proper Lesson of instruction to us, than any Man could be. As to the objection, that “the Weakness of the Flesh is absorbed in the Divinity;” it may just as safely be asserted, that the Power of the Divinity is absorbed in the Flesh: for as to the Consequence of the Conjunction of the Angel of the Covenant with the Flesh in which he was incarnate; or in what degree the Temptations of *Christ* might affect Him; that is, how easy or how difficult it might be for *Christ* to resist them; I presume we are intirely ignorant; and have no right to argue



from our Ignorance against the Fact itself. All that we can safely assume upon this Subject, is this; that a Being of the most consummate Wisdom and Perfection did actually go through great Affliction, and Death itself, with Patience, Faith, and Resignation; and was rewarded by God in his time, for all that he did and suffered in obedience to his Will: and from these *Data* we argue, as follows.

1. If a Being so greatly superior to Man, in Wisdom and every Perfection, did actually devest himself of his Glory, which he had with the Father before the world was<sup>n</sup>; and take upon him the form of a Servant, and perform all the same Duties, which a Man is required to do, in obedience to his Will; It is a lesson of Instruction to us; that no Being, let him be ever so great and wise, is superior to the practice of the same moral Virtues which we are obliged to; or to a state of Humiliation, when ever it may be agreeable to the wisdom of God to allot it to him: And consequently, that the practice of Righteousness, and submission to the Will of God by a perfect Obedience, are agreeable to the highest Wisdom and Rectitude; and ought to be practised by all inferior Beings, who would aim at a praise-worthy Character, by a right and wise Conduct.

2. As the supreme God of the Universe did appoint a state of Afflictions and Death to be gone through by so great and good a Being, as his own beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; it is a sure Indication and Lesson to us, that whom God loveth he chasteneth; and an Encouragement to bear with Patience what-

Mr. Embay, in his answer to Dr. Bonnet, tells him; that his Adversaries believed, that the Word emptied himself [of his great Glory] and became like the rational Soul of an other Man; which is limited by the bodily Organs, and is in its Infancy as it were dormant; for by the settled laws of Nature it exerts not then its noblest Powers; so that the Man is at first like an Animal; and those powers and latent faculties discover themselves gradually, as the Organs admit; and probably never display themselves in all their full strength, in this gross and feculent body; nor till it be spiritualized and refined at the Resurrection. Now, according to this Opinion of the Word, which makes our Saviour's humiliation very astonishing and endearing, and which is the true and great mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh; it will be easy for them to admit the Word to be deprived of its formerly extraordinary Abilities, and to become subject to fore Temptations and great Afflictions in reality; also to grow in Wisdom, as others do; though at the same time it did conduct his actions, and something very extraordinary too appeared in him at 12 Years of age, (even before his great Union with the Holy Ghost) when he reasoned so wonderfully with the Jewish Doctors; so that it acted as the bodily organs admitted. Embay's Tracts. Vol. II. p. 183.

<sup>n</sup> John xvii. 5.

N

ever



ever Afflictions we ourselves may suffer; considering them as the appointments of a wise and good God; and tending to wise and good purposes.

3. As in recompense of *Christ's* Obedience he was highly exalted and rewarded; this is a lesson of Instruction to teach us Faith and Confidence in God's Justice and Bounty; that, if We suffer with *Christ*, we shall also be glorified together. 1 *Pet.* ii. 19, 21. *Rom.* viii. 17.

But, if the *Socinian* considers this Example, merely as a Copy for our Imitation; and imagines, that, if *Christ* had never existed in a state superior to Man, he would be a more proper Copy for our imitation: he must consider it either as more *easy* to imitate in such a case, — or as more *likely* for us to choose it for our imitation, — or as a greater *Encouragement* to our imitation; because we should have a better prospect and hope of coming up to the perfection of the Copy. To which it may be answered;

I. The Example or Copy could not be more *easy* to imitate; because it is the very same Copy, under both suppositions; whether the Person who set it us be a *mere man*, or superior to a man; and, where the Copy is the same, the Difficulty of imitation must be the same.

2. The Example of a *mere man* would not be more *likely* for us to choose for our Imitation; than the Example of a superior Being. For, the more perfect any Being is, the more we think to please God by the Imitation of him; and the less perfect he is, the less good we can promise to ourselves by being like him.

In the Imitation of a *mere man*, we must be often full of doubts; whether the Example be fit for Imitation; But, in the Imitation of the Son of God, we are under no such difficulty; the belief of his superior Nature being an assurance to us, that it is a Copy fit for the Imitation and Improvement of Man; for that very reason, because it is set us by a Being of Wisdom and Perfection infinitely superior to Man.

The *Socinian* may perhaps reply; that we can have no doubt of the Perfection of the Copy set us by *Christ*, though he be a *mere Man*: For this *mere Man* was filled by the holy Ghost, and God gave not his Spirit by *measure* unto him; and therefore *His* Example



Example may be well concluded to be faultless and without Spot. It is true: but, if this be the case, it comes under their own Objection; for a Man so helped and assisted by a supernatural Power of the Spirit without measure given unto him, *Jo. iii. 34.* is no greater Encouragement to us to hope for Success in our Renitency against Temptation, who are not so assisted; than if he were a Superior Being, and partaker of the divine Nature.

3. But, in truth, the whole of this objection arises from the Mistake of imagining no Example is fit for our Imitation; but what we are able to come up to: an objection which may be made to several other Texts of Scripture upon the same Mistake; as when we are commanded to be followers of God, as dear Children<sup>o</sup>; and to be perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

When *Phidias* and *Apelles* set before their Scholars Copies for their Imitation and Improvement, they did not choose out those that were most faulty; but those which were most perfect. These the Scholars were to imitate, as well as they could; and their Masters, not Themselves, were the proper Judges of their Improvement; whereas a faulty Picture or Statue would have led them into Errors, and a perfect one was chosen to lead them to Perfection by degrees. And upon this account it is; that no other Being has ever yet appeared in the World, that could be exhibited as a perfect Exemplar; but *Christ* alone. Nay, even the *ideal* portrait of a perfect Man, which was drawn by the *Stoics*, was greatly defective in many particulars; it some, it was carried far beyond the Life; in others, it as much fell short of it. It appears therefore; that this Objection of the *Socinians* is rash, and without Foundation.

If it be asked; why *Christ* was the particular Person chosen by God; rather than any other, to be the mediator between God and Man; and sent upon the gracious message of Pardon and Forgiveness, and ordained to undergo Pain and Death for our sakes—the reason appears to be; because he was more intimately related to us, and more nearly concerned in our Welfare, and consequently in our Salvation; than any other Being in the Universe could be: for we were created by him, and for him. There is one Lord *Jesus Christ*,

*Eph. v. 1.*

*Mat. v. 48.*

N 2

says



says the Apostle; *by whom* are all things, and we (*διὰ*) *by him*. We are therefore the work of his Hands; and consequently, the natural objects of his Care and Love; for it is impossible to conceive a nearer and dearer Relation. But this is not all; we are not only created *by him*, [*δι' αὐτῶν*] but *for him*; [*εἰς αὐτόν*] being chosen *in him* [*ἐν αὐτῷ*] before the foundation of the World, to inherit his Kingdom; to be joint heirs with him in his inheritance, which he hath purchased; and there to live and reign with him, and be glorified together. By reason of which intimate connection he calls us his Brethren, and his Children whom God hath given him, parts of the same Building, members of the same Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones.—It is upon account of this love and regard to us, that God hath particularly chosen *Him* above all other Beings to be our Prince and Saviour, to bring millions of his Creatures to glory and honour and immortality, and make them partakers of the divine Nature: to die no more, but to be equal to the Angels and children of God.

No other Being therefore do we know-of; who was so proper to be sent into the World for our Salvation, as He; no other, who would be so faithful a Mediator, or so indulgent a Judge; no other, who would with so unbounded Benevolence dispense the free gift of eternal Life to all, who should be meet and fit to receive it; and save to the uttermost all such as should come unto God by him; no other, who would look upon *our* Salvation as a Reward done to *himself*; and a Joy that was set before him, and a Recompense and Satisfaction of all his Labours, Sufferings and Death: And, what is of the highest consequence to be considered, there is no other Being in the Universe, that we know-of; who by his meritorious Obedience hath gained an everlasting Kingdom, and purchased a possession by his Merits, which he hath power and desire to bestow upon us;

nor

\* 1 Cor. viii. 6. — Col. i. 16. *αὐτόν* is explained to signify the *final Cause*, by *Valla* and *Erasmus* — *in respect of him*, that is, that he might rule over them; by *Vatablus*, *to his Glory*; by *Piscator*, *Beza*, &c. *by him*, as the Cause; and *for him*, as the End; says *Whitby* ad locum.

† Mat. xxv. 34.

‡ Rom. viii. 17.

§ 2 Tim. xi. 12.

¶ Heb. ii. 2.

‡ ii. 11. 13.

† Eph. ii. 14. 15.

‡ Eph. v. 30.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 4.

‡ Luk. xx. 36.

c A Kingdom or Society prepared in Heaven for the inhabitants of this World, that they may not be left unconnected with one another, or the rest of the Universe; seems, according to our Ideas, to be absolutely necessary to their Happiness: for we can have no Notion of Happiness, without



nor any other, capable of gaining such a reward; or of sufficient Benevolence to have gone through such difficulties to obtain it for us.

But the consequences of *Christ's* mediation, as I have already hinted, are not confined to Mankind alone; as if *they* only were advantaged by it, and the Salvation of Mankind by *Christ* were unconnected with the Government of the universe: for *all* intelligent Beings, who are acquainted with the history of his Abasement and Exaltation, are instructed by it in the same Principles; and actuated by the same Motives. Even the holy *Angels* have here an Exemple before them, most worthy of *their* Study and Imitation; and sufficient to confirm *them* in the constant practice of Faith and Obedience. For though some of them have formerly fallen from Righteousness, and kept not their first estate; who are reserved unto the judgement of the great day<sup>d</sup>: yet the history of *Jesus Christ* is of itself sufficient to prevent any farther Apostasy among them for the future. Here they experience the Righteousness of God clearing itself, from the most intricate and unaccountable Appearance of *suffering* Excellence and *successful* Malice, in a method beyond their Conception; and yet in a plain and intelligible manner, when reveled; agreeable to the analogy of his Government in other cases: Here they find an exemple in *Jesus Christ* of an absolute Faith and Dependence on God's Righteousness, and a persevering Obedience unto the end, under amazing Difficulties and Afflictions, and all the Infirmities of the Flesh; raised and rewarded by God, in his own determinate time and manner, to a state of the highest Glory: all the malice and power of his enemy being reduced into subjection under his feet. To see the Pride and Wickedness of the subtle and powerful, thus con-

without something of that nature; some Order and Regularity, some thing going forward, some end in view. And there is no reason to imagine, that there is any other Kingdom or Society in the Universe prepared and fitly adapted to their Condition; or that this would have been prepared for them, but for *Christ's* sake; who was to be the King of it, and for whom they were created; or that God would have carried-on the Race of *Adam* to inherit this Kingdom; if it had not been the will of *Christ* himself to make them Partakers of it with him, agreeably to the original Design of God before the World began.

<sup>d</sup> *Jude*—6. Some *Christians* read the Text of *Deut.* xxxii. 8. according to the version of the LXX: where it runs thus; when the most High divided the Nations, when he separated the Sons of *Adam*, he appointed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the Angels of *God*. And they understand this Text of *St. Jude* of those Angels, who did not take a proper care of their particular Districts.



quered by the humble Obedience and Righteousness of the truly wise; is sufficient to manifest in fact, (which is the strongest and most prevail'ing argument possible;) that, however intricate the circumstances of things may appear to the imperfect view of Men or Angels; yet Faith in God, and Obedience to his commands, will certainly at last surmount all Difficulties; and personal Merit meet a sure Reward. And thus through the whole Creation, wherever this history shall be known, not only among Men, but also among the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places<sup>e</sup>, who were formerly desirous to look into these Mysteries<sup>f</sup>; it will influence them with a more prevail'ing Faith and Steadiness to worship and obey the King of Heaven; all whose works are Truth, and his ways Judgement; and those who walk in Pride he is able to abase<sup>g</sup>.

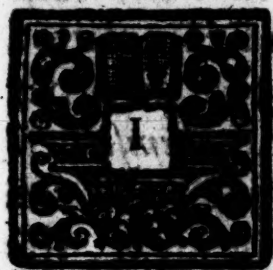
I have now fully considered the three Propositions, which I intended to examine in this Letter; and proved them to be the Doctrines of the new Testament, agreable to the Nature of God and Man, and to the former Revelation given to our Fathers: and I imagine by so doing I have sufficiently apologized for my present Faith. Nothing remains to complete my Design, but only to explaine some few Texts of Scripture which have been misunderstood; and obviate some few Objections to the *Christian* Scheme. But these are more properly postponed to another Letter, by way of Appendix; than suffered to interrupt the Course of the argument in these, which I have already gone through.

<sup>e</sup> Eph. i. 9.<sup>f</sup> 1 Pet. i. 12.<sup>g</sup> Dan. iv.



## LETTER THE SEVENTH.

But this I confess unto Thee; that, after the way which they call *Heresy*, so worship I the God of my Fathers: believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets. *Acts xxiv. 14.*



IN my fifth Letter, when I was considering the opinions of *Grotius*, *Stillingsfleet*, and others; viz. that God *could not* forgive Sin, except the Son of God should suffer as a Sacrifice for the Expiation of it, by undergoing the Punishment which the Sin deserved; I examined the Doctrine so far, as to shew; that God *has* the Power, consistent with his Justice, of remitting entirely the punishment of the Sinner, of his own free Grace: which was all that the subject I was there considering required. — But whether the passing-over the punishment of the Sinner was to be brought-about by transferring it upon the head of an innocent Person; was left to be considered afterwards—There are some other subjects, besides this, which I have touched upon in my former Letters; but could not sufficiently explaine, as I went along, without taking-off your Attention to the main argument, by such long digressions: I shall now therefore consider them all together; and so make this a Letter of Dissertations upon various subjects.

I have already proved<sup>b</sup>; that Guilt is entirely *personal*, and inseparable from the Agent; and cannot possibly descend from one Person to another; and that Punishment cannot extend beyond the Guilt, without Injustice: and consequently, the Punishment due to *Adam* could not extend, as a Punishment; to his innocent Posterity. But the doctrine I was then exposing, viz. the Injustice of punishing the Innocent for the Sins of the Guilty, must be here discussed more fully; because the state of the Question with regard to the Sufferings

<sup>a</sup> See *Whitchcote's* Aphor. 268. 276. 536. 701. 739. 1002. &c.

<sup>b</sup> Letter V.



of *Christ*, is a little different from that of punishing *Adam's* Posterity and Bp. *Stillingfleet* has laid it in the fairest light it is capable of, by considering it as undergone *voluntarily* and by *choice*; which is not supposed to be the case of *Adam's* Descendents.

His words, which I have before quoted, are these: "that, notwithstanding his Innocency, a person may oblige himself, by some act of his own Will, to undergo that Punishment, which *otherwise* he did not deserve; which Punishment, in that case, will be *just*, and agreable to Reason".

This I shall shew to be a Mistake; though I must confess, after the *Christians* had formed a notion, contrary to Scripture; that the sons of *Adam* were to be punished for the Sin, which *He* had committed before their Existence; they could scarce avoid supposing, that an other Person should be punished for the Sins which they commit *themselves*; for it would be hard to punish them for *both*. But, what good can accrue, from punishing the *wrong* person, rather than the *right*; the *innocent*, instead of the *guilty*; does not appear very clear: Nor does it appear, that any Thanks are due from me to a Judge; who forgives me a Sin, that I did not commit. Moreover, as no Being in the Universe is more merciful than God himself; if any one hath interceded with him to forgive, where God himself was unwilling to do it; such an Intercession must be improper, and betray an Error in Judgement: and it must be highly derogatory to the perfection of God to comply with it. And therefore I dare not suppose, that *Jesus Christ* did ever petition for any thing; which God was not as willing to grant [*δωρεάν*] freely or *gratis*, as the Intercessor was to intercede for it *gratis*: nor that the Intercessor would think of shewing Mercy, where the Supreme Being saw fit to be severe: Much less could it be possible; that the God of all Mercies should require an Equivalent or Payment, for an act of Mercy; which *Christ* was not only desirous that we should receive, but willing to go through great difficulties and distresses to procure for us; even so far as to pay the Debt, or undergo the Punishment himself: For, in such case, as Dr. *Clarke* observes; no Acknowledgement is due to Him, to whom the debt is paid; but to Him that paid it<sup>a</sup>. Nor is it possible that God should require of *Christ* to pay a debt, which was not due from Him; or

<sup>a</sup> *Stillingfleet* on the Sufferings of *Christ*, folio, 303. oct. 397.

<sup>a</sup> *Clarke's* sermons; octavo, Vol. i. 305.



CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION**, referring to Letter V. Page 94

§ I. *Bp. Stillingfleet* quoted, and His notion farther examined. 96

To punish an innocent Person; unjust; notwithstanding he suffers voluntarily. 97

The many Absurdities which follow from supposing Christ to have been punished for the sins of Men. 97

The difference between Punishment and Suffering. 98

The latter only applied to Christ in Scripture; Punishment or Guilt, never. 99

Dr. Clarke's Opinion considered; that God permitted an innocent Person to be punished voluntarily. 100

How the Doctrine of Christ's Punishment has been softened. 101

Opinions of Theoph. Gale, Suarez, Bp. Stillingfleet, Dr. Clarke, Dr. James Foster, and John Fox. 102

§ II. Of imputed Sin, and imputed Righteousness. 103

§ III. Of vicarious Punishment. 104

§ IV. In what Sense Christ died for us. 105

How Christ was a Ransom. 106

How Christ was a Sacrifice. 107

No vicarious Sacrifice in the Mosaic Law. 108

The original design of Sacrifices. 109

Altered in the Mosaic Law. 110

Whence Atonements receive their Efficacy; and what they mean'd. 111

Analogy between the Mosaic and Christian Sacrifices; and how they differed. 112

Christ no Priest, according to the Law of Moses. 113



~~The Sacrifice of Christ was of a Nature superior to the Mosaic~~

Sacrifices

Page 119

It was a Sacrifice of Righteousness

122

Literally ~~it could not be~~ a Ransom, and a Punishment, and  
a Payment of a Debt, and a Sacrifice of various Kinds,  
and a gratuitous Forgiveness of Sin: but *Figuratively*, it  
might be all these

124

§ V. How Christ bare our Sins

125

§ VI. Christianity not founded on narrow Principles

127

The Benefits of Christ's Death not confined to the Covenants

128

In what sense he is the Saviour of all Men

131

St. Paul's Reasoning considered upon the subject

132

Mr. Robert Barclay's Reasoning upon St. Paul's Words

131

§ VII. Objected, that our Salvation depends upon our Faith

132

The Just shall live by Faith, a false Translation

135

The Nature of the Faith of Abraham, and of Secrecies

136

Justin Martyr quoted, and Chillingworth

137

Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, &c. does not relate to our

future Judgement; the Text explained

§ VIII. Objection.—That every Man will be equally well

pleasing to God, who does as well as he can; therefore

no Occasion for a Revelation;—answered

139

§ IX. Two Capital Objections of the Deists, consider'd

142

1. If Christ came to reform Mankind; how comes it,

that the Christians are no better than other Men?

—answered

144

2. Why was not Christianity given sooner; and why not

universal; why has it made so little Progress in the

world, &c.—answered

145

Two principal Causes; of Christianity's being lost, where it

had once been received; and not received, where it has

been preached—1. the early Corruption of its Doctrines.

2. the Wickedness of its Professors.

152

Whether Christianity be the true Religion

155

Prejudices against it considered

157

Christianity and Philosophy under the same Difficulties

159

Of Subjects above Reason

160

Protestantism hath no Mysteries, contrary to Sense and Reason

161

The Scriptural Sense of the Word *Mystery*

162

Arguments,



# L E T T E R VII.

xcvii

Arguments, on which the Belief of <i>Christianity</i> rests, plain and intelligible	Page 163
Not <i>improbable</i> , that God might revele his Will to Man	166
The <i>Fact</i> proved; that he <i>hath</i> done so	167
The Certainty of this Intercourse between God and Man by <i>Prophecy</i> , takes off all Improbability from the <i>Mira-</i> <i>cles</i> said to be performed for the same Purpose	170
The Credibility of the <i>Miracles</i> renders probable the Truth of the <i>Doctrines</i> they are brought to prove	171
Mr. <i>Chubb</i> quoted; no <i>Miracle</i> can prove a Falsity to be a Truth	
The <i>Doctrine</i> therefore ought to be examined	172
The <i>Doctrine</i> attested-to by the Scripture <i>Miracles</i> , worthy of all Acceptation	176
And the Evidence of <i>Christianity</i> rendered unexceptionable	177
<i>Postscript</i> to the Seventh Letter; containing an Examination of Mr. <i>Hume's</i> Notion of <i>Miracles</i>	178

## E R R A T A.

Page	Line
95	penult. for <i>of</i> r. <i>of</i>
96	1. put a colon after <i>Posterity</i> ;
102	20. for the Scripture r. Scripture
105	21 and 22. read <i>λυτρωται</i> and <i>λυτρωται</i>
107	21. for This Death r. His Death
111	11 and 28. r. <i>Sins</i> and <i>Sin</i>
114	26. r. when any animal
118	27. r. <i>Christ</i>
123	14. r. For 1. if
126	1, 2, 3, 4, 5. r. upon him, meaning than, committed, shall not, that the
128	4 from the bottom; r. fall into
142	10. f. § 8. r. § 9.
150	28. r. <i>Christianity</i> ;

L E T T E R



Arguments, on which the Belief of Christianity rests, plain and intelligible	Page 163
Not impossible, that God might reveal his Will to Man	165
The Fact proved: that he has done so	167
The Certainty of this Intercourse between God and Man by Prophecy, takes off all Improbability from the Miracles said to be performed for the same Purpose	170
The Credibility of the Miracles renders probable the Truth of the Doctrine they are brought to prove	171
Mr. Campbell quoted; no Miracles can prove a Falsity to be a Truth	172
The Doctrine therefore ought to be examined	173
The Doctrine attested to by the Scripture Miracles, worthy of all Acceptation	176
And the Evidence of Christianity rendered unexceptionable	177
Possibility to the Seventh Letter; containing an Examination of Mr. Hume's Notion of Miracles	178

R E T A A

Page	Line
97	penult. for v. 2.
98	1. put a colon after P. 2. v. 2.
102	20. for the Scripture 1. Scripture
105	21. and 22. read together, and 23. v. 2.
107	21. for This Doubt in His Death
111	11. and 22. 1. v. 2. and 23. v. 2.
112	22. 1. v. 2. and 23. v. 2.
118	27. 1. v. 2.
123	14. 1. For 1. 11.
126	1. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. upon him, meaning than, committed, shall not, that he
128	4. from the bottom; 1. fall into
142	10. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
150	28. 1. v. 2.



receive it, if it could be offered. But above all Conception it is most contrary to the divine Attributes, that God should be so desirous of Punishment, which he calls by the prophet his Work, his *strange* Work; his Act, his *strange* Act; as to inflict it upon the *best* of Beings: choosing the most *improper* Person in the Universe to punish, as being the best beloved by him, and the most perfect; rather than not inflict it upon some one. All these absurdities follow from the notion, that *Christ* was *punished* for the Sins of Man; in the sense, in which a *guilty* person is *punished*: and there is no other proper meaning to the word. And yet this is the opinion held among some *Christians*; though there is not a single word of the Guilt of *Christ*, or his Punishment, in the whole new Testament; and all these difficulties may be avoided, by adhering to the words of Scripture; and distinguishing what it *does* say, from what it *does not* say; that is, that he *suffered* and *died*; whereas it never says, that he underwent any *Punishment*.

Now, though the difference between these be very remarkable; yet, as it serves some Ends to confound them, and particularly as it gives an opportunity to the Deist, to make the Sufferings of *Christ*, under the Idea of a Punishment, appear inconsistent with the divine Justice; it may be necessary to shew, wherein they differ.

And 1. Suffering may be the natural Effect of matter and motion, without any act of Volition; as, when a House falls, and thereby a Person breaks a limb, or loses his life. But Punishment is the act of a reasonable Being; founded upon an act of Judgement and Condemnation.

2. Punishment or Reward finishes and completes the whole that is due to every moral Action; whether it be worthy of the one, or the other.

3. When an action deserves Affliction; and the Agent in consequence of it, is by a *judicial* act condemned to suffer, as he deserved; and all that was *due* to him upon that account, is completed, so that there remains no *debt* or *demand*; such an Affliction is properly a Punishment. But,

4. When a Person suffers an Affliction, which was *not due* to him; or which he did *not deserve* to suffer by any bad action: or when he

<sup>e</sup> *Is. xxviii. 21. extraneum factum sum, alienum opus sum.*

<sup>f</sup> *Clarke's sermons; Vol. I. p. 305. Octavo.*



has received an *excess* of Affliction, *above* what his Actions have deserved: in these cases, there remains to be paid a *Recompense*, in order to balance the account between what he had *deserved*, and what he had *received*; nor can the account be fairly settled, till that recompense be paid; and the recompense itself balances the account, and there remains no debt or demand on either side: such an affliction, or such an excess of affliction, where a recompense is due, is not properly a *Punishment*; but only an Affliction or Suffering.

He therefore, that has a just expectation of Reward, in recompense for his sufferings, cannot properly be said to be *punished*; but only to be *afflicted*, or to *suffer*. And this was plainly the case of *Christ*; who, to this end, both died and rose again and revived, that he might be Lord both of the Dead and Living: who, for the Joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the Shame; and is set down at the right hand of God.

In short, Punishment is inconsistent with a Recompense; because it is itself the recompense and balance of the account: which is the case of the criminal, who suffers the Law; in whom it would be ridiculous and absurd to expect to be rewarded for his Sufferings. But Suffering, when distinguished from Punishment, is the fate of every one; who undergoes pain, or labour, or trouble of any kind, upon any other account than that of Guilt. And therefore, as I argued before, with regard to the posterity of *Adam*; so I argue now, with regard to *Christ*.

If God is just, he will not extend the Punishment beyond the Guilt; for, if he does, he punishes the Innocent: And, as *Guilt* is *personal*, and *inseparable* from the agent; (for no one can be guilty of an act, in a proper sense, but he that committed it;) it cannot be *transferred* from one Person to an other; and consequently, neither can the *Punishment*: and therefore *Christ* could not be punished for *Us* by a just God; because *He* could not be *guilty* of *our* Sins. And, if neither *Christ* is punished, nor the *Criminal*; the Sin is not punished, nor the Laws of God vindicated. For Sin in itself is an abstract Idea. Abstract the Sin from the mind of the Sinner, and it becomes an indifferent Action: It has no existence, but in the obliquity of the Sinner's mind; and is in itself incapable of Reward or Punishment. Sin can in no sense be punished, but by the Suffering of  
the



the Sinner: If any other person suffers punishment for it, he suffers unjustly; because unconnected with the Guilt.

Now if the Punishment of the Sin, be understood to mean the Punishment of the Sinner; (which is the only sense it is capable of;) then the Argument, that Sin must necessarily be punished, that the Laws of God may be vindicated; will extend farther than is intended by those who use it: for it will prove the necessity, that the Sinner himself should be punished: and then a Substitute can be of no use at all. For nothing can be more absurd and inconsistent; than to suppose it necessary, that the Laws of God should be vindicated by the Punishment of the Sinner; and yet the Sinner should be allowed to escape unpunished.

But what seems to be no less extraordinary, is the Conclusion which is drawn from this Hypothesis; that God's hatred to Sin is best shewn, and the honour of his Laws best vindicated, by such a Substitution: which is the same thing, when translated out of sophistry into common sense, as to assert; that God's hatred to Sin is best shewn by forgiving the Sinner; and his love of Righteousness, by punishing the Righteous: or that God's Laws are best vindicated by punishing an innocent Person, who hath never transgressed them; for the sake of saving a Transgressor, who deserved to be punished for the breach of them. And all this absurdity depends upon the sophistical notion; that the Sin is to be punished, and not the Sinner; which, if ever so true, would serve to no manner of purpose in restraining Vice; since if once the Sinner was satisfied, that He should get clear from personal Punishment; he would not be likely to concern himself what would become of the Sin.

And the Injustice of punishing an innocent Person cannot be evaded, as Bp. Stillingfleet and other learned men have imagined; by saying that Christ underwent a voluntary punishment: because, whether voluntary or involuntary, unless it can be proved, that the punishment was just, and what he deserved, (which could not be, because he was innocent;) it is only asserting, that an innocent Person submitted voluntarily to an unjust Sentence; and his voluntary submission to it made it just: which it is absurd to suppose. And yet Dr. Stillingfleet has expressed himself, as if he would have us understand him in this sense: for he says; "He may oblige himself, by an act of his own Will, to undergo

\* See the quotation from Gale; Letter V. p. 44, 47. viz. part IV. chap. vi. § i. p. 369, 370.  
O 2 that



that Punishment; which *otherwise* he did not deserve. But how does his Submission to it make him *deserve* it? This is what can by no means be proved; For nothing can make him *deserve* it, but personal *Guilt*. The patient Resignation of the Sufferer has nothing to do with the Sentence of the Judge. The whole question before him is, only whether the Culprit be *guilty*, or not *guilty*; and, if he condemns the *innocent* to suffer punishment, his Sentence is *unjust*.

Dr. Samuel Clarke says<sup>n</sup>; Though to punish an *innocent* Person instead of the *guilty*, is evidently *unjust*; yet to *permit* an innocent Person to take it [that is, *punishment*] upon himself, is by no means so. And Bp. Stillingfleet says; that a Person, notwithstanding his innocence, may *oblige himself*, by an act of his own, to undergo Punishment. So that, according to Dr. Clarke, God only *permits* Christ to suffer; and, according to Bp. Stillingfleet, *Christ obliges himself* to suffer. Be it so; but where are we now? Is not the question entirely altered? If this be the truth, it is not God who punishes *Christ*, but *Christ* who punishes *himself* by God's permission. And then, where is the necessity of God's vindicating his honour to the World; if he only permits it to be vindicated? On the other hand; how can it be said, that God has the Power to forgive; if the Forgiveness depends upon the Will of an other Person? This Supposition destroys both his *absolute* and *ordinate* Power<sup>i</sup>: for, as John Fox tells us, in his Sermon at *Paul's Cross*<sup>k</sup>; "Cause for Christ to die, there was not; as his Life was innocent, so there was no Law to condemn him. No neither his Father, salving his justice, could lawfully enforce him; only his own good will, and obedience to his Father's will; and none other." But does the Scripture ever use such Language? did God only *permit* Christ to come into the world and die; or did he come, because the Father *sent* him?

As to what Dr. Clarke supposes, that *Christ* might take the punishment upon himself; If he means, that *Christ* could consider it as a *punishment*; it is impossible: for he knew himself to be innocent; and that the punishing the innocent would be an abomination, in the sight of God; because unjust. Why then will not the *Christians* clear themselves of these difficulties, by keeping close to the words of

<sup>n</sup> Sermons, Vol. viii. p. 373. octavo; Vol. i. Sermon. cxxxvii. pag. 142. folio.

<sup>i</sup> See Letter V. p. 49.

<sup>k</sup> Pag. 49.

Scripture;



Scripture; and declaring, that he *suffered* for us; or that he *suffered* for *our Sins*, the just for the unjust; in which there is no difficulty? For he, who voluntarily undergoes any Affliction to save a *guilty* person, can no more be said to be *punished* for him; than if he underwent the same Affliction, to save an *innocent* one: the act being the same, in both cases: And yet he may be said to have *ransomed* him, to have *sacrificed* his life for him, and to have *redeemed* him by his blood; (if he *died* in the cause; whether the person, for whose sake he suffered, was innocent or guilty;) but he cannot be said to be *punished* for him; because Punishment supposes Guilt in the person who suffers. Nay, though he should judge himself to be *guilty*; which he must do, if he submitted to suffer as a Punishment; the truth would be, that he had passed a false judgement upon himself: which would give no right to any one to punish him, who knew his Innocence. In short, it is impossible that *Christ* should consider himself as *guilty*; and consequently impossible for him to believe his *Sufferings* to be a *Punishment*; [and it is plane, that he *did* not; because he suffered with a *Reward* in view; which is inconsistent with the nature of *Punishment*:] and it is impossible that God should punish him; because he was without Spot, at the very time he suffered Death.

It is worth while to observe; how this Doctrine of his punishing *Christ* for our Sins, hath been altered, and softened, and given-up, inch by inch. The learned *Theophilus Gale*, speaking of God's *absolute* Justice, says; by this *absolute* Justice and Dominion God can inflict the greatest Torments, even of Hell itself, on the most innocent Creature; and he quotes *Suarez*, saying; we must allow that God, as supreme Lord, can inflict on an innocent Man all that evil that is in the Torments of Hell: and *Gale* adds; that God did *de facto* inflict the highest Torments on an innocent, pure, spotless Creature; even the human Nature of his own Son; it is most evident. *Court of the Gentiles*; Part IV. p. 368.

Bp. *Stillingfleet* softens the matter, and says; Notwithstanding his Innocency, a person may *oblige himself*, by some act of his own, to undergo that Punishment, which otherwise he did not deserve; which Punishment in that case will be just and agreeable to Reason<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Letter V. p. 39.



After him Dr. Samuel Clarke says; though to punish the Innocent, instead of the Guilty, is evidently unjust; yet to permit an innocent person to take it upon himself, is by no means so.

Lastly, Mr. James Foster, after all these Opinions had been canvassed and found wanting, expresses the same Doctrine with John Fox; "I must own, I cannot see how it could be unjust or tyrannical; to propose even to an innocent Person to suffer, with his own free consent; in order to promote so great a good: especially if we suppose, what the Christian Revelation expressly teaches in the present case; that he would be gloriously and amply rewarded for it<sup>m</sup>.

If it be said, that this is only a dispute about Words; I answer, it is a dispute of the utmost Consequence to be precisely understood in the true Sense. For, if we allow the Sufferings of Christ to have been a Punishment; we must allow, that in punishing him, the supreme Being acted an unjust part: and, as long as it is maintained to be a Christian Doctrine, we can never expect that either Jew, Mahometan, or Deist, will be converted to Christianity. But this is not the only instance; in which altering the Words of the Scripture hath obstructed the progress of Christianity.

§ 2. There are some Christians; who, in order to shew the Justice of God in the punishment of Christ for our Sins; and our Forgiveness by his Righteousness; have invented a Notion, they pretend to find in the New Testament; which, if true, must destroy all our Reasoning upon the nature of God's Justice, and all our Hopes in the practice of Virtue: and that is, the doctrine of imputed Sin; and imputed Righteousness; by which they understand, that, on the one hand, Our Sins are all imputed to Christ; and He is punished for them: and His Righteousness is imputed to Us, and we are rewarded for it. But we may be as sure, as we are of our own existence; that a righteous and just God will neither impute Righteousness, where it is not; nor over-look it, where it is: "for he that justifieth the Wicked, and he that condemneth the Just, even they both are an Abomination to the Lord<sup>n</sup>."

The Scripture Phrase of imputing Righteousness, in the true Sense of it, as given us by the Apostle of the Gentiles, means neither more nor less than the forgiveness of Sin. He tells us; David describeth the Man to whom God imputeth Righteousness without

<sup>m</sup> Foster against Tindall, 334.

<sup>n</sup> Prov. xvii. 15.



Works: saying, Blessed are they, whose Iniquities are forgiven; and whose Sins are covered. Blessed is the Man, to whom the Lord will not impute Sin<sup>o</sup>. Where we see, that *imputing* Righteousness is equivalent to the *forgiving* Iniquities; the *covering* of Sin, and the *not imputing* of Sin: in which sense, the Doctrine is very plain and intelligible; and the Figure of speech very natural. For as He, that takes away an obstruction to the Sight, is said to give Sight; and He, that takes away an obstruction to our Health, is said to give Health; So He, that takes away Sin, which is an obstruction to our Righteousness; is said to give or impute Righteousness: and it is upon this account that *Christ* is called The Lord our Righteousness.

§ 3. If it be then asked; upon what Ground the *Christians* have founded the strange Opinion of *vicarious Punishment*; so derogatory to the Attributes of God, and so contrary to the whole Tenor of Scripture: It must be reply'd; they have founded it upon *figurative* Expressions, taken *literally*; and upon Texts of Scripture written by *Jews*, and intended to be understood agreeably to *their* language, customs and religious ceremonies; and then interpreted by the customs and ceremonies of the Heathen Philosophers, who had relinquished Paganism and become *Christians*.

The *Christians* tell us of the many mixtures and additions, which *Philo* hath thrown into his works; out of a vain and eager desire, which is also observable in *Josephus*, to adapt the *Jewish* Laws and Theology to the Taste of the reigning Philosophy of the *Gentiles* of their Times<sup>p</sup>. The observation is just: but this vain and eager desire has not been a failing peculiar to the *Jews*; but common to all Nations. Dr. *Henry More*, and more lately Dr. *Middleton*, have shewn it in many customs and ceremonies of the *Romish* Church; which appear to be old Heathen Rites new-vamped and adapted to *Christianity*: and therefore it is but just, that the *Christians* should bear their part in the accusation; as well as We: and we may safely return them the complement they have bestowed upon *Josephus* and *Philo* with Interest; by making reprisals upon *Origen*, *Clem. Alexand.* and almost all their primitive Writers. For, when the Heathen Philosophers, among which were many of the followers of *Plato*, did in great numbers receive the *Christian* Religion; and very few of them knew any thing of the Idiom and Genius of the

<sup>o</sup> Rom. iv. 7.

<sup>p</sup> Pyle on Heb. i. 1.



*Hebrew* language, or the nature of the *Jewish* ceremonies: They also seem to have been as vainly eager and desirous to interpret the figures, allusions, doctrines, and ceremonies, of the *old* Testament, and particularly their Sacrifices, according to the notions which they had imbibed among the *Heathens* before their conversion: sometimes explaining the *Christian* doctrine by the *Platonic* Philosophy; sometimes carrying the allusions farther than was intended by the Writers; sometimes giving their ceremonies a sense entirely *Heathenish*; and thereby introducing a language into the *Christian* Church, which the genuine system of *Judaism* was a Stranger to. And among these vain and eager accommodations of *Judaism* to *Gentilism*, was introduced at first the notion of *vicarious Punishments*: for *Judaism* knows no such doctrine; and if it was not the sense of the *old* Testament, it can never be the sense of the *new*.

§ 4. The doctrine, which we find in the Gospels and Epistles, is this: that the Blood of *Christ* was shed FOR many<sup>a</sup>, for the Remission of Sins; or, as it is expressed in other Words, the Son of Man came to give his Life a ransom FOR many<sup>b</sup>. St. Paul expresses the same Doctrine variously. He gave himself a ransom FOR all<sup>c</sup>. He gave himself FOR us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity<sup>d</sup>. He was delivered FOR our Offenses<sup>e</sup>. God gave him up FOR us all<sup>f</sup>. He died FOR our Sins according to the Scriptures<sup>g</sup>. He gave his Life FOR the Sheep: *Christ* our Passover was sacrificed FOR us<sup>h</sup>.

All these Texts are manifestly intended to express the same Doctrine. And the first question, in order to explaine the Sense of it, seems to be this; in what *sense* these things were done FOR us; whether in our *Stead*, or on our *Account*, and for our *Advantage*. The *English* word FOR, and the *Greek* words ἀντὶ, ὑπὲρ, &c. being capable of any one of these senses.

Now if the true Doctrine be, that these things were done upon our *Account*, or for our *Advantage*; the word FOR will have the same sense, in all the Texts: but if the true Doctrine be, that they were done *in-stead-of*; the sense of the word will not be the same, in the different Texts; but must be greatly varied. For *Christ*

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28. ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

the Many, or for All; as 1 Tim. ii. 6. ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων. see Dan. xii. 2.

1 Tim. ii. 6.

<sup>b</sup> ὑπὲρ Tit. ii. 14.

<sup>c</sup> διὰ Rom. iv. 25.

<sup>d</sup> ὑπὲρ Rom. viii. 32.

<sup>e</sup> Cor. xv. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Jo. x. 15.

<sup>g</sup> ὑπὲρ 1 Cor. v. 7.



could not be delivered, *instead* of our offences; nor die, *instead* of us; for, if he did, we should not die our selves: nor could he be our Passover, sacrificed for us, *in our stead*; for we were never sentenced to be sacrificed: and the Passover was not a Sin-offering; and therefore these things could not happen *in our stead*; but only upon our *account* and for our *advantage*.

If it be said; that *Christ* gave himself a *Ransom* for us, 1 Tim. ii. 6. and was therefore sacrificed in our *stead*; it must be observed, that the payment of a *Ransom* is no Sacrifice; and therefore no *vicarious* Sacrifice: it means no more, than that he died to save us. — The Word *Ransom* means *literally* the Price of Redemption: but this is only when the Redemption signifies *literally* a deliverance from captivity, by a Price paid. But as a deliverance from captivity may be brought about by Power, or other means; the Word *Ransom* in such case must be *figurative*; and signify the power or other means, by which we are delivered: and the case must be the same, where there is no Captivity; but merely a deliverance from any kind of Affliction. Thus God redeemed the *Jews* from *Egypt*; not by a price paid, but by power and an outstretched arm. And thus *Moses* is called a Redeemer (though translated a Deliverer, Acts vii. 35. λυτῶν) and Dr. Sykes observes, that there are above *fifty* instances in the old Testament, where the word [λυτῶν] to *ransom*, means barely to deliver; without any Price or *Ransom* paid at all. But, if a *Ransom* must always suppose a Price paid; I would ask, what was the Price paid by the redeeming Angel spoken of by *Jacob*; and called the Angel that redeemed him from all evil?

\* The *Passchal* Lamb was not to atone or expiate; nor was it offered in any other sense than merely to save the *Israelites*; for their Advantage, or on their Account. See Sykes on Redemption, 336. In the *Mishna* and by *Maimonides* it is said to be like the Peace Offerings: it was all carried away by the Proprietor, except the Blood and Inwards; and there was no meat and drink Offering, no Portion for the Priest, and no laying on of Hands; as in expiatory Sacrifices.

If any Stress be laid upon the *Greek* Prepositions, we may observe, that, as *Christ* suffered *ἐν ἡμῶν*, for Us; so we also are said to suffer *ἐν αὐτῷ*, for Him: Phil. i. 29. not *instead* of him, but upon his account. — We also suffer *διὰ δικαιοσύνης*, not *instead* of Righteousness; but on account of it: 1 Pet. iii. 14. So *ὑπὲρ* is used, Acts xvi. 7. — and *ἀντὶ*, Matt. v. 28. an eye for, or on account of an eye. Matt. xvii. 27. give it for me and thee. Rom. ii. 17. 1 Cor. xi. 15. Heb. xii. 2, &c. See Sykes on Redemption, p. 311. 397. 215. 221. 197. 244. 252.

\* Gen. xlviii. 16. this Redemption relates to ch. xxiii. 15. See also Deut. vii. 7.



Now our deliverance from Sin and Death by *Christ*, is an act of Power; like the deliverance from *Egypt*; and the Power of delivering was gained by a Life and Death of Obedience: for *Christ* suffered, and died, and revived; that he might be the Lord of quick and dead. His Death therefore was not so properly, nor so immediately, the Ransom or Price paid for our Redemption; as the price paid in order to gain the power to redeem and become a Prince and a Saviour: and our Redemption or Deliverance was the Effect of this power, and is gained immediately by the exercise of it.—This will appear more plainly, when we consider; that the same figurative expressions are used of God the Father; who is likewise called our Redeemer; and is said to have bought us with a Price, and to have given up his Son for us all. But to whom did God the Father pay the Price, or the Ransom? certainly, to no one. The words therefore can be only figurative; and meant to express the method, by which God hath saved us; viz. by giving up his Son to Death; as *Christ* hath saved us, by giving up himself.—And this very small difference, whether the Death of *Christ* be the immediate Cause of our Redemption and Deliverance from Sin and Death by way of Ransom; or the immediate cause, by which he gained the power to ransom or deliver; makes a very great difference in the doctrines which follow from them: the one is Scripture, and the other not so; the one exalts our notions of the supreme Goodness, the other degrades them; the one supposes, that God had a great Scheme to accomplish for the Redemption or Deliverance of man from Sin and Death; and that the sufferings and death of *Christ* were proper to complete it in the wisest and most effectual manner; and that *Christ* was willing to undertake whatever God should please to appoint, in order to accomplish that end; and, accordingly he died, and for his obedience to death received as a reward the Power of ransoming or delivering from Sin and Death; and as it was by his obedience to the Will of God, which was completed by his Death, that he gained the power to ransom or deliver; his Death itself is figuratively called a Sacrifice, and a Ransom; though the actual deliverance was the exercise of that Power.—This is very intelligible, and agreeable to Wisdom and

1 Cor. vi. 20.

Rectitude;



Restitute; so that in the strict sense of the word he was not so properly the Redemption and Ransom, as the Redeemer and Ransomer; that is, the Deliverer or Saviour: the *other* doctrine is, that it was inconsistent with the nature of God's Government of the World, that he should forgive a Sinner; without vindicating the honour of his Laws; and therefore mercifully passing by the offenders, he punishes an innocent person in their stead; receiving *his* Punishment as a full Payment, Satisfaction and Ransom. And thus God Almighty, the most benevolent, just, and merciful, of all Beings in the Universe, is supposed to redeem us from Sin and Death, to which we were in captivity; by punishing the innocent instead of the guilty, rather than forgive us *freely*; as the Scripture declares that he has done.

The calling the Death of Christ a Ransom, in the sense of a Price paid for our deliverance, is certainly as near to the literal sense, as a Figure can well be; but it is not precisely the Truth; it is the Cause once removed, instead of the immediate and efficient Cause: for, though the Power of delivering or ransoming was gained by his Death; yet the actual Deliverance was effected by his Life: so that we are not saved by his Death, but by his Life; *Rom. v. 10*; that is, by a voluntary exertion of that power which he gained by his death. This Death was therefore the *immediate* and *efficient* cause of his power; and the Exertion of his power the immediate and efficient cause of our Salvation. Whereas, if his death had been merely a literal Ransom or Redemption, it could have reached no farther than the penalty of the first Offense; and the regaining what had been before lost: but the effect of this power which he gained by death, or rather by his obedience to death, extends to an other Life; and Happiness in his Kingdom. See the Apostle's reasoning on this subject; *Rom. v. 15*, &c.

Furthermore, if we consider the death of Christ as the immediate cause of our deliverance, in a literal sense; we must explain also in a literal sense who it was that held us in Captivity; and not only to whom the Ransom was paid by Jesus Christ; but to whom the Price was paid by God the Father. The Ransom could not be paid literally to God, for he is the Redeemer; and he redeemed us by giving-up his Son to death; and though we read, that we



are redeemed to God; we never read of our redemption from him; and consequently, the Ransom and Price paid could not be literally paid to God: first, because a literal Ransom could not be paid to the Redeemer; or to the person who paid it; and secondly, if it were a literal Ransom, it must be literally paid to the person who held us in Captivity: but we were not in captivity to God, but to Sin and Death; (his Servants we were, to whom we obeyed;) and from these we were to be delivered and redeemed.

Was it then a literal Ransom, which was to be paid to Sin and Death? This cannot be; because there are no such Persons; there remains then no Person, to whom it could literally be paid; except we consider ourselves in Captivity to the Devil: but we never heard of any price that was paid to Him; we are delivered from Him, by an act of Regal Power. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with Power; who went about doing good, and healing all those who were oppressed by the Devil. He took Flesh and Blood; that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death; that is, the Devil. And Death is swallowed up in Victory: and therefore we give thanks to God, who hath given us the Victory through Jesus Christ our Lord; and this Victory over Death is the Victory over Samael, the Angel of death; and consequently, there can be no ransom paid to Him; but we are ransomed from his power by the superior power of a Prince and a Saviour.

It is true, that Christ did suffer great Distress in gaining this god-like Power; yet not as an Offender; but as a Prince who undertakes great difficulties and dangers to deliver his Country from Ruin; whom God makes use of as his Instrument to accomplish his Will, (as he speaks both of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus;) and afterwards rewards, because the Pleasure of the Lord had prospered in his hands. But he is not to be looked upon, as if he were smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted; while employed in this dangerous and laborious service: nor are the difficulties he goes through to be considered as vicarious Punishments, by which he saves them from the destruction they had deserved: but as the voluntary Sufferings of a

<sup>a</sup> Acts x. 38.

<sup>i</sup> Heb. ii. 14.

<sup>g</sup> Isai. xxv. 8.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 57.



great and glorious Prince, for great and glorious Purposes. For he knew; that it was the design of God, that the world should be instructed in righteousness by him; and that he should suffer death, in carrying on that important work; and that God would reward his Sufferings in so good a cause, by raising him up to be a Prince and a Saviour.

We find in St. *John's* Gospel, that the *Messiah* is called the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World: but it is nowhere said, that he did this as a Victim or vicarious Sacrifice. The allusion seems to be made to the liii. chapter of *Isaiab*; but the Lamb is not there considered as a Lamb to be sacrificed; but as a Lamb to be sheared; and where it goes on to speak of him as making his soul an offering for Sin, he is not considered as a Lamb or a Victim; but as a Man acting voluntarily, and offering-up his Life. And though in the *Apocalypse* he is spoken-of as the Lamb that was slain, in allusion to the *Jewish* customs; he is not ever spoken-of as a vicarious Sacrifice: for they had no Sacrifices of that nature.

That the word *Sacrifice* is frequently used in a figurative sense, merely by way of allusion, both in the *old* and *new* Testament; is undeniable. For we find, that the *Sacrifice* of God is a troubled Spirit; and that he is pleased with a *Sacrifice* of Righteousness; and in the *new* Testament we read of the *Sacrifice* of Praise, and of a spiritual *Sacrifice*; and our Bodies are said to be a living *Sacrifice*; and the gifts sent by St. *Paul* to the *Philippians* by *Ephraimitus* are called an odour of a sweet smell, a *Sacrifice* well pleasing to God: and to do good is called a *Sacrifice*, with which God is well pleased. And, where the figurative use of the word was so common, even when there was no Death; it would have been wonderful indeed, if it had not been sometimes applied to the *Christian Sacrifice*, where there was the *real* Death of *Christ*; who voluntarily gave-up his Life to procure the good of Mankind.

It is not therefore at all surprizing; that St. *Paul*, who deals so much in figures, and alludes so continually to the *Jewish* customs; should speak of the death of *Christ*, as a *Sacrifice* or an Offering: and

<sup>1</sup> *Pf.* xli. 16.  
*Phil.* iv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Is.* li. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Heb.* xiii. v.

<sup>4</sup> *1 Pet.* ii. v.

<sup>5</sup> *Rev.* xii. 1.



use the common *sacrificial* terms, by way of figure; without ever suspecting that the words would be taken literally.—But, on the contrary, if it be the true and literal sense; it is impossible to account for it, how the Evangelists and the rest of the sacred writers should never have mentioned it as such; in a plain and intelligible manner: Especially, if it be a doctrine of such Importance, and so essential to a true belief, as it has been represented by the Moderns. Whereas *St. Paul* himself speaks of it in a very indeterminate manner; sometimes, as a Peace-offering; sometimes, as a Sin-offering; sometimes, as our Passover; and sometimes, as a Propitiation: All which expressions, when considered as Comparisons or Figures, are very just; though inadequate: but, as all these Sacrifices do in some particulars differ from one another; it is impossible they should be all true and exact, in the same literal sense; much less in a sense to which the *Mosaic* Law was a stranger; as when a propitiatory Sacrifice is explained in the heathenish sense to mean a vicarious Sacrifice of Life for Life\*. For the Sacrifices among the *Jews* had no such meaning; and consequently, the word *Sacrifice* in the new Testament, which alludes to them, ought not to be so understood: as will farther appear from what follows—

1. That the Life of the Animal is never called in the *old* Testament a *Ransom*; nor is there any such expression, as ἀντίλυτρον, ἀντίψυχον, λύτρον ὑπὲρ ψυχῆς, Life for Life, Soul for Soul, equivalent Ransom for Soul; or the like†. Nor was the Atonement made, by the death of the Animal; as is generally imagined by the common people; but by the sprinkling of the blood afterwards: for the Atonement was made by the Priest; but the office of the Priest, who made the Atonement, did not begin; till after the Victim was slain by the person who brought it: and then the Priests, the sons of *Aaron*, made the Atonement; by sprinkling the Blood about the Altar, or by pouring it at the bottom of it. So that nothing vicarious can

\* The whole nation of the *Gauls*, says *Cæsar* in his Commentaries; is much addicted to Superstition: and therefore such as are greatly afflicted with Distempers, or engaged in Battles and Dangers; either sacrifice Men for Victims, or make a Vow that they will do so: because they think the Divinity of the immortal Gods cannot otherwise be rendered propitious, than if the life of Man be given for the life of Man. *Cæsar*. Com. Lib. vi. cap. 15.

† *Sykes* of Sacrifices, 135. 139.

‡ *Levit.* vi. 7. See *Sykes* on Sacrifices, 23. 24. 180. 194. 203, and *Theophilus Gale's* Court of the Gentiles.



be proved, from the death of the Animal; as the Atonement did not consist in it.

2. As the Words *כִּפָּרָה*, &c. are not found in the *old Testament*; which certainly would be there, if the *Mosaic Sacrifices* were mean'd to be *vicarious*; so neither does the *Hebrew* word *קָפַר* (*pice obduxit*) the original of what is translated the Propitiatory or Mercy Seat [*כִּסֵּי הַכֹּפֶרֶת*], convey any such meaning; but signifies in general to *cover*; and from thence is used for Expiation, or Atonement, or the covering of Sin, in the sense in which it is said in *Psalms xxxi*, and cited thence *Rom. iv. 7*, blessed are They, whose Sins are covered; blessed is the Man, to whom God will not impute Sin. According to which sense, he that forgives, is himself the Propitiation; as *Christ* is called by *St. John*. So that nothing *vicarious* in the nature of the *Jewish Sacrifices*, can be urged from the Etymology of the word.

3. Instead of the *Jewish Atonements* being *vicarious Sacrifices* of life for life, like those of the *Druids*; it is notorious, that, according to the *Mosaic Law*, 1. No Atonements could be made, where Life was forfeited. 2. Atonements were made, where there was no Guilt; as for Places and Things, and natural Infirmities, and accidental Uncleaness. 3. Atonements were made, without the death of any Animal, or the shedding of Blood; as by an offering of flour, &c. and consequently, these Sacrifices could not possibly be mean'd to be *vicarious*.

In truth, Sacrifices were at first design'd as free-will Offerings and gifts of the first-fruits of the Earth or Fold; and then offered up to God such things as were under their care, by way of Thankfulness for the increase of them; and not by way of Atonement for Sin. Accordingly, the Sacrifices of *Cain* and *Abel* are called *Min-*

*1 Jo. ii. 2. iv. 10.*  
*Gen. iv.* They are called Gifts, *Ex. xxviii. 38. Lev. xxiii. 38. Num. xviii. 29, &c.* and in the new Testament, *1 Cor. xvi. 2. 2 Cor. ix. 12. 13. 2 Tim. i. 4. &c.* It was the opinion of *Bochart*, in a sermon preached at *Caen*, Dec. 30, 1663, on *Gen. iv. 3. At the end of the days*; that by *days* was mean'd the Year, at the end of which, in September, *Cain* and *Abel* offered up their Sacrifices, 1. as commemorations of the Creation, which was in Autumn; 2. as thankful acknowledgements of God's blessing them with the fruits of the earth; answering to which the Jews had their feasts of In-gathering, when we read of the joy of Harvest; *Deut. xiv. 22. 23. Ps. iv. 7.* The feast of Vintage, in September; the custom of the Men of *Sichem* of sacrificing and feasting at the end of the Year; *Ju. ix. 27. Jer. xii. 1. 5. 8.* And hence the *Bacchanalia*, &c. *Gen. i. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.*



chas or Gifts; and were taken from the fruits of the Ground and the firstlings of the Flock.

THE Origin of Sacrifices was the same; both among the Jews and Pagans. Aristotle tells us, that the ancient sacrifices and assemblies to that end were after the gathering-in of the Fruits; for an oblation of the first-fruits: and in Rome they tasted not of their new Corn or Wine, before the Priests had sacrificed the first-fruits; according to the order of Numa: and the same was the Law of the XII Tables; and this is confirmed from the ancient custom of offering in the first place some of the hair cut from the victim's forehead, which was called ἀπαρχαί, first-fruits, and the action was expressed by ἀπαρχεσθαι, as in Homer — πολλὰ δ' Ἀθηνῆσιν ἀπαρχόμενος νεφέλης τρίχας ἐν πυρὶ βάλλαν.

The same appears from translating *Therumab* (Offerings) by the word ἀπαρχαί, first-fruits; though it was an offering of gold and silver, and brass, and purple, and scarlet, &c. And this original meaning of Sacrifices, as gifts of the first-fruits, continued, for any thing we know to the contrary, till the days of Abraham. And such Writers, as have fixed a narrower signification to the word *Sacrifice*, have only involved the subject in Egyptian Darkness; and fatally perplexed and exposed to scorn and contempt the simplest and most rational institution in the world.

Abraham is called, by Cyril, a lover of Sacrifices; but, of what nature his Sacrifices were, we are not certain. The Sacrifice mentioned in Gen. xv. was only in Vision, as the Rabbins in Pirke R. Eliezer expound the whole chapter; and it appears from comparing the fifth and twelv'th verses: in the fifth, God brings Abraham into the field at the shutting up of the Evening; and shews him the Stars of Heaven: and in the 12th verse it is yet Day, and the Sun is not gone down. In this vision, Abraham enters into Covenant with God, according to the Cerimonies of the Chaldeans, among whom he was educated: upon which Cyril says; God, the great Governor of the Universe, condescends to the weakness of the good old Man; and ratified the Oath, according to the usual Cerimonies.

\* *Arist. Eth.* l. viii.

\* *De Relig.* tit. i. lex. iv.

\* *Exod.* xiv. 2. 3. lxx. translation.

\* *Pliny*, xviii. cap. 2.

\* *Homer Odyss.* and *Iliad.* 2.

\* See *Sykes* on Sacrifices.



of the *Chaldeans*. And this method of making and renewing Covenants afterwards continued in use by the command of God<sup>d</sup> and was used upon no other Occasions.

The sacrificing *Isaac* seems to be similar to the offering of the first-fruits; the son being the fruit of the body<sup>e</sup>; only with this difference, that it was undertaken by the immediate Command of God; and this appears to be a Sacrifice the nearest of any to the Sacrifice of *Christ*; being both of them acts of obedience to God, and undertaken by his Command; in both, the life was to be offered up to God as a free Gift; and without any offense committed by the offerer, from which he was to be purified; and there was no meat or drink offerings at either, to prove them to be expiatory; and no sign of eating and drinking at God's Table; for neither God nor Man could be supposed to partake of such a Sacrifice; and therefore the sacrifice could not be considered as the Bread of God, nor the altar as the Table of God.

At the giving the *Mosaic* Law, the case was greatly altered from what it was before. Sacrifices of various kinds were instituted, and became the method of intercourse between God and Man on every occasion; in order to keep separate the worship of the *Jew* and *Gentile*. For no one could partake of the Sacrifices of *Jehovah*, who was a worshipper of the *Gentile* Gods; their rites and ceremonies being so opposite. Besides this use, the ceremonial Law was a shadow of the moral Law; and the washings and purifications by blood and water and oil, had an analogy to the purifications of the mind; and the several sorts of sacrifices and purifications all served in general to promote a religious Worship, and a pure and holy Life: and were appropriated.

<sup>a</sup> *Limborch* says, in his dispute with *Orobio*—It seems probable to Me, that Sacrifices were not commanded to *Cain* and *Abel*, and others who lived before the Law: for I meet with no signs of any such command in the Scripture: But rather that they began from the first motion of pious Men, who knew by Reason that God was to be worshipped; and that thanks ought to be given to him for his blessings, as to the supreme Benefactor; and believed that they ought to express the grateful sense of their minds by some external act; and that this would be best done, by consecrating to God in a particular manner a part of the good things which he had given them; and destroying them in honour of God. *Amica Coll.* p. 609.

And *Orobio* says, in answer to *Limborch*—But these things are not so necessary to the observance of the Law of God; that it would be imperfect without them. This is so far from the truth; that the learned *R. Moses Maimon* thought, that Sacrifices were not commanded by God; as being necessary; but because the People, being accustomed to sacrifice in *Egypt*, would go back to the religious rites of the *Gentiles*; if they were not prevented by a command to sacrifice; therefore, &c. *ibid.* 210.

<sup>e</sup> The Prophet *Micah* preserves this Similitude, when he says; shall I offer the fruit of my Body for the sin of my Soul? *Micah* vi. 7.

Q

some



some to times of thanksgiving, others to prayer for blessings, or forgiveness of sin in general, or of particular sins.—

But, if we consider, what that essential Relation is; which was equally preserved in all sacrifices and oblations, and from whence alone we can form a judgement of the meaning of a Sacrifice in general; we can find no other than this—that it was a sacred Gift<sup>s</sup> set apart to God, by which the Sacrificer shewed his readiness to part with his property to religious uses; and thereby openly and publickly<sup>s</sup> manifested his worship of that God, to whom the Sacrifice was made<sup>b</sup>: for Sacrifices were never mean'd as *private* but as *publick* acts of Worship. And if we consider, what is mean'd by Atonements and Propitiations; so as to take in *all* Atonements on *every* Occasion; we shall find them to have no other meaning and design, than to purify or sanctify, or set apart any Person or Thing to the service of God; by separating them from common use<sup>i</sup>: for it is only in this sense that Atonements can be understood to relate to Things and Places, as well as Persons; to the guiltless, as well as the guilty; and to be made by water or oil, or a sacrifice of flour, or touching the altar, as well as by the death of a Victim.

By these methods the sacrificers were purified by the *Mosaic* law, as to the flesh; for this was all, that any sacrifice could do; the blood of bulls and of goats could reach no farther than the expiation of *legal* Uncleaness<sup>k</sup>; and they approached to God with pure Hands, to signify the purity of the Heart; and as blood was looked upon among the *Jews* with the greatest reverence, it was always made use of as a purification; when any animal was slain in sacrifice. But such sacrifices were not looked-upon as more complete, than when no blood was shed; as in the offering of Flour, or of the Scape-goat, [which is called a Sin-offering, and was presented alive before the Lord<sup>l</sup>]; or when the Atonement was made, without either death or offering, by touching the Altar. From all which it appears,

<sup>s</sup> *Corban* was a Gift to God only; *Mincha* signified a Gift either to God or Man.

<sup>b</sup> *Plato* lays it down as an inviolable Constitution; that no one have an Altar in his own private house. *de Leg. lib. 10.*

<sup>c</sup> *Mr. Pyle* on *Levit. i. 4.* says; This free burnt-offering was made in Acknowledgement of the Sovereignty, Power and Providence of God; in Testimony of his (the Sacrificer's) owning him as his only Lord, and continuing in Covenant with him and imploring his blessing.

<sup>i</sup> *Gen. ii. 3.* When God sanctified the seventh day, it was by setting it apart for *religious* uses. So Persons were sanctified, *Exod. xix. 10.* and Houses, *Lev. xxvii. 14.* and Fields, *ver. 16.* and the Altar, *Ex. xxix. 36. 37.* and the People, by touching it.

<sup>k</sup> *Heb. ix. 13.*

<sup>l</sup> *Lev. xvi. 5. 10.*



that the Atonement, according to the *Mosaic* law, became such; because it was receiv'd as such by God, and not from any value in the offering itself, or any thing *vicarious* in the nature of it. And from hence we may observe; that the *Christians*, when they speak of the infinite Value of the blood of *Christ*, mistake the very nature of the *Mosaic* atonements; in which the intrinsic value of the Sacrifice was entirely out of the question. The word *Atonement*, or any others supposed to be equivalent to it, are so seldom used in the *new* Testament; as plainly shews them to be mere allusions to the *Jewish* Customs; like many other things, to which *Christ* and the death of *Christ* are compared: but by no means capable of a *literal* meaning, even in the *Mosaic* sense of the word; and much less so, in the sense of a *vicarious* sacrifice.

Indeed, it is impossible; that any of these expressions should be understood in any other than a *figurative* sense: because, when *Christ* came into the World, to gather together both *Jews* and *Gentiles* under one head; and consequently, to put an end to the Law of Cerimonies, which separated them, and which the whole world could not possibly comply with; all Atonement appointed by the *Mosaic* Law naturally and necessarily ceased. But as it was not fit, that any of the benefits should therefore cease, which had ever been receiv'd by them; but it was still proper, that the worshippers of God should be purified and sanctified, and fit for the service of God, as they were before; all these Requisites, and all these Advantages we receiv'd by the *Christian* Dispensation, are spoken-of in the *Christian* Church (but most certainly in a *figurative* sense) in the same words as they were before spoken-of in the *Jewish* Church. And *Christ*, who has conferred them upon us, is spoken-of in the language of the *Jewish* Law, which had now ceased to be of force, as the High-Priest, and the Victim: and the Propitiation [or Atonement],<sup>m</sup> and the

<sup>m</sup> 1. The Word *κατάλλαξις*, which is translated *Atonement*, *Rom. v. 11*. ought to have been translated *Reconciliation*; as the verb and participle are used in the foregoing verse. And it is observable; that, wherever mention is made of Reconciliation to God in the new Testament, it refers to reconciling the heathen World, or such as had ceased to be the people of God, to God, and making them the people of God, and granting them the privileges of his Kingdom. *Sylar*, of *Redemp.* p. 56. 201.

We were reconciled to God; by the Knowledge of his Righteousness and Love to Mankind, in giving us Remission of sins pass'd through his forbearance: and giving up his Son *Jesus Christ* to death for us all; as the faithful Witness to the Doctrines which he preached. Thus we are reconciled



the sacrifice of every kind, our Sin-offering, and Peace-offering, and Passover and Sanctification, and Righteousness: And we are said to be purified by the washing of water by the Word; sometimes by the washing of Regeneration; sometimes our hearts are said to be sprinkled from an evil Conscience; which must in its very nature be a Sanctification, without any other Atonement: at other times, when the *Christian Religion* is considered as a Covenant, we are said to be sanctified by the blood of the Covenant; and, when it is considered as a doctrine to be believed and practised, we are said to be sanctified by the word of Truth: and, when the Persons are considered, by or from whom we receive the Doctrine; we are said to be sanctified by the Father, or by the Holy Ghost, or by *Christ*,

cited by his Death, or by Faith in his Blood—And, as he received power to give eternal Life, we are saved by his Life. Whereas, if this Reconciliation [*καταλλαγή*] was an Atonement or Expiation in a literal sense; there could be no such distinction made by the Apostle: but Salvation would have been wrought by the death of *Christ*, as well as the Reconciliation. But the Apostle speaks here precisely; If, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life. *Rom. v. 10.*

2. The Word *ἱλαστήριον*, which is falsely translated Propitiation, *Rom. iii. 25.* signifies the Mercy-seat. See *Jos. Mede* on God's House. *Taylor* on the *Romans*, 268. *Sykes* on Sacrifices, 152. and on Redemption, 192. The Mercy-seat is described, *Exod. xxv. 17—22.* This was the place, from whence the commands of God were given out to the Jews; by *Christ*, the *Jehovah Angel*. See *Deut. viii. 89.* But, since *Christ* is made the Salvation of God to the ends of the earth; (*1y. xlix. 6.*) he is become the Mercy-seat to the Gentiles; as well as to the Jews. God hath set him forth, says the Apostle, *Rom. iii. 25.* to be a Mercy-seat through Faith in his blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins, that are pass'd through the forbearance of God. Here we see, that *Christ* is called the Mercy-seat; from the very nature of his office: which was to declare the Righteousness of God for the remission of sins pass'd through his forbearance.

And upon this account, because we receive from him Remission of Sins, which was the effect of the Sin offerings, with regard to legal uncleanness, and the purifying of the flesh; he is called by *St. John* *ἱλαστήριον* which properly signifies a Sin offering, and is translated a Propitiation. The Word is used in the New Testament but twice; once in *Rom. v. 11.* where it ought to have been translated Reconciliation, as I observed; and once in *1y. ii. 2.* where it signifies a Sin-offering.

But the death of *Christ* was of a nature, infinitely superior to any thing of that kind; as I shall presently prove: and must be therefore understood in the same sense, as when *Christ* is said by *Isaiah* to become the Salvation of God. He was not the Cause, that influenced God to save; for that was his own Benevolence and Love to the World: but the Means, by which he saved: that is, the very efficient Cause or Saviour. He did not make God propitious; but God sent him to become a Propitiation, in the sense of a Saviour; and he saved, by forgiving Sin. He did not reconcile God to the World; but he reconciled the World (that is, the Gentile World) to God. And by forgiving their Sins, upon their Repentance and entering into the Church of God; he is said *ἱλασμεναι τὰς ἀμαρτίας* to appease Sin; or to take away the sting or poisonous quality or bad effects of Sin. Thus the phrase is used, *Eccles. iii. 3.* who so honoureth his Father, maketh atonement for his Sins. So *Eccles. xx. 28.* and *xxviii. 5.* All these expressions are only figurative and partial representations of that great Truth; that *Christ* is constituted the Salvation of God, to give Repentance and Forgiveness. *Rom. iii. 25.* *Acts v. 31.*



who of God is said to be made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption. Whereas in the precise literal sense they are sanctified only by *Christ* himself, or by the Father through him, by the forgiveness of Sins; all other Causes by which they are said to be sanctified, are allusions to the *Mosaic* Cerimonies; or relate to the particular Method, by which our Sanctification is gained; or to some more distant Causes, *sine qua non*, which were necessary to complete it.

But though the offering up to the service of God the whole Employment of his Life, and even Life itself, was a Sacrifice (in the original Sense of the Word), or a sacred Gift; and a Satisfaction well pleasing to God; and was rewarded with great Blessings, as was the intended Sacrifice of *Isaac*; yet was it by no means a Sin-offering, in the sense of the *Mosaic* Sin-offerings; for the following Reasons—

1. because he was sent into the world with the gracious message of Pardon and Forgiveness to all such as would receive him; which Commission he executed before his Death: whereas, in the *Mosaic* Sacrifices, the Sacrifice was made before the Forgiveness.

2. It is true, that the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* labours to shew a similarity between the *Mosaic* and the *Christian* Sacrifices; which no doubt there was: and, to make out the analogy, uses very hard figures: as when he compares the sprinkling the blood of the victim, to the sprinkling our hearts from an evil conscience; and the Tabernacle to the body of *Christ*, and the flesh of *Christ* to the Veil which opened the way into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; and calls it a new and a living way, and considers *Christ* both as the High-Priest and the Victim. But, were the analogy ever so exact, it would not make the expressions *literal*: and in many particulars there is no manner of likeness between them. For in the Sacrifice of *Christ* there was no salting with salt, no

° Hostias & Victimæ Domino offeram, quas in usum mei protulit; ut rejiciam ei suum munus? ingratum est: cum sit litabilis Hostia bonus animus & pura mens & sincera conscientia. Igitur qui innocentiam colit, Domino supplicat; qui justitiam, Deo libat; qui fraudibus abstinet, propitiatur Deum; qui hominem periculo surripit, optimam victimam cedit: Hæc nostræ sacrificia, hæc Dei sacra sunt; sic apud nos religiosior est ille qui justior. *Min. Felici. Qd.* See *Persius* Sat. ii. l. 72. Quin damus id Superis, de magna quod dare lance Non potuit magni *Messalæ* lippa propago; Compositum jus fasque animi, sanctos que recessus Mentis, & incoctum generoso pectus honesto— This figurative expression being so natural, it is the greater wonder that any one should think of fixing a literal sense upon it.

imposition:



imposition of hands, no blood sprinkled by the priest, in which consisted the atonement; for the atonement was not made by the death of the victim, but by the sprinkling of the blood; as I have already observed: Man the offender did not offer him to God; nor begged forgiveness of his Sins: all which things were customary, and most if not all of them necessary, in a *Mosaic* expiatory Sacrifice<sup>p</sup> of a Victim. But this was not the Case with *Christ*. He was crucified and slain, as a common Malefactor.

If it be said; that *Christ* was the Sacrificer, and he offered himself up to God; it should be considered, that the Sacrifices of the *Mosaic* Law were offered to gain forgiveness to the Person who sacrificed; but this could not be true of *Christ*, for he had no Sin to be forgiven.

If it be said; that he sacrificed, as a Priest, to gain forgiveness for others; it should be observed, that, according to the *Mosaic* Law, he was incapable of such an office: for the Law requires, that the Priests should be of the Tribe of *Levi*; or the family of *Aaron*. "But He [*Christ*], of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another Tribe; of which no man gave attendance at the Altar. For it is evident, that our Lord sprang out of *Judah*; of which tribe *Moses* spake nothing concerning the Priest-hood"<sup>q</sup>. And therefore *St. Paul*, who was aware of this objection; when he speaks of *Christ* as a Priest, tells us; that he was a Priest of a superior Order to the *Aaronical* Priesthood, being a Priest for ever after the order of *Melchisedek*<sup>r</sup>. This is a plane concession; that, according to the *Mosaic* Law, *Christ* was incapable as a Priest to offer any sacrifice. But, supposing he had been of the Tribe of *Levi*, the case would have been just the same; with regard to all Mankind, except the *Jews*: for the *Jewish* sacrifices did not extend beyond the Circumcision. The Sacrifice of *Christ* could not therefore be a propitiatory sacrifice, according to the *Mosaic* Law; and much less a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World<sup>s</sup>. And, besides all this, we must consider what *St. Paul* says at the 4th verse; that *Christ* could not offer himself to God for us, till he was constituted our High-Priest; and that was not before his Ascension into Heaven. For, if he were on Earth, he should not be a Priest: those being

<sup>p</sup> See *Sykes* on Sacrifices.

<sup>q</sup> *Heb.* vii. 13. 14.

<sup>r</sup> *Ver.* 17.

<sup>s</sup> *Job.* ii. 2. iv. 10.  
Priests,



Priests, who offer gifts according to the Law<sup>t</sup>. He could not therefore, properly and literally speaking, offer any sacrifice to God, whilst he was here on earth, according to the Law of *Moses*; because he was not a Priest according to the Law<sup>u</sup>.

If it was therefore a literal offering or sacrifice made by *Christ* as a Priest; it was of a higher nature, and of a prior and superior dispensation to the *Mosaic*; such as was offered in the days of *Melchisedek*, the Priest of the most high God. But we have no reason to think, that any offerings before the Law were mean'd to be expiatory; but all of them eucharistical.

But farther, the Sacrifices of the *Mosaic* Law sanctified only to the purifying of the Flesh; and procured no Forgiveness for moral Turpitude; but only for legal Uncleaness. But the sacrifice of *Christ* had something in it of a nature greatly superior; and in its consequences not only took away all Sin, from those who received his Laws; but gained for them eternal Life: for it was not a performance of mere Rites and Cerimonies; but a life of perfect Righteousness. And in this sense I understand St. *Paul*, when he considers it as superior to those literal Sacrifices: His argument is this—when *Christ* cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God—He taketh away the *first*, [that is, burnt-offerings and sacrifice, and offerings for Sin, which he says were offered by the Law, verse 8.] that he may establish the *second*; [viz. the doing the will of God.] Now I argue—

<sup>t</sup> Heb. viii. 4.

<sup>u</sup> See *Sykes*, 284. See Note p. 22.

<sup>x</sup> We do not find, that the sacrifices were eaten by *Cain* and *Abel*; though Dr. *Sykes* supposes it, in p. 167; and assumes it as certain, in p. 179. But, if they had eaten it, it would not prove the notion of eating and drinking at God's Table, as a sign of being reinstated in Friendship with him; to be so early—*Isaac* certainly was not intended as a sacrifice to be eaten; and we are not told of any meat or drink offering, which *Abraham* had prepared at that time. Nor does it follow, from *Jacob's* calling his brethren to eat bread. For it was natural to invite their Friends to partake in the solemnity of the Sacrifice, and afterwards entertain them; without any such notion. Nay, the Entertainment itself might be looked-upon as a sacred thing; and yet be no part of the Sacrifice; nor a meat or drink-offering: much less that they considered themselves as eating and drinking at God's Table; which, as I apprehend, was a notion introduced long after.

<sup>y</sup> Heb. x. 5. &c.



If sacrifices for sin are actually taken-away by *Christ*; then an actual and literal sacrifice for sin does not come in the place of them: for God cannot be supposed to take-away the *first*, in order to establish the *second*; if the *second* was the same as the *first*. So that the offering the Body of *Christ* cannot be here considered as a legal sacrifice, or any thing of that nature; except merely in a figurative sense: for the Merit of *Christ*'s sufferings consisted in his Obedience; and in Reward of that Obedience he received the power to save.

And it is no objection to this; that what *Christ* did and suffered continues to be called a Sacrifice for sins, at the 12th verse. For it is a common figure, as Mr. *Souverain* observes; that the name, the qualities, and even the personality, of the thing that ceaseth to be, or is rejected, is given to that which takes its place; though it be of a different Nature. God, rejecting Sacrifices, gives the name of Sacrifice to the Obedience which he accepts. To the same purpose the Apostle argues in the ninth chapter to the *Hebrews*. If the blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the ashes of a Heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh; as it did, in the *Mosaic Law*: how much more shall the blood of *Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your Consciences from dead works to serve the living God! That is, if the blood of bulls and goats cleansed from all *legal* turpitude; how much more shall the death of *Christ*, under the guidance of the eternal Spirit, which was the highest act of Obedience to the will of God, cleanse us from all *moral* turpitude; and prevail with us to avoid all sin and wickedness for the future, and be reconciled to God! Those Offerings, as Mr. *Cruden* has observed in his Concordance, though they *represented* Grace and Purity, did not *communicate* them: though they convinced the sinner of the necessity incumbent on him to purify himself and make satisfaction to God;

7 *Heb. x. 10.*

8 *Le Platonisme dévoilé; part. 1. ch. 18.* There is nothing more natural, says Dr. *Allix*; than to give to a thing, which supplies the place of an other, and which procures all the fruits of it, the name of that, instead whereof it is substituted. St. *Paul* observed this rule in his Epist. to the *Heb.* If he gave the name of Sacrifice to the Obedience of *Jesus Christ*, it was to suit his Expressions to the Ideas, which prevailed under the ancient Dispensation; wherein the principal acts of Piety consisted in Sacrifice: he applied these ancient Sacrifices to the death of *Christ*; without intending any other Mystery in it.

they



they did not impart *Innocence* to him." But, though it was beyond the power and nature of the *Mosaic* sacrifices to cleanse from moral evil and the consequences of it; yet it was not beyond the power of the *Christian* sacrifice, considered figuratively as a sacrifice of Righteousness<sup>a</sup>, to gain the power of forgiving.

The sacrifice of *Christ* had therefore the nearest resemblance of any to the sacrifice of *Abraham*, when he was about to offer up his son. It was an act of Righteousness, in Obedience to the will of God, as *his* was; and the Effect of both was of the same nature: for as *Abraham* by this act of Obedience gained great blessings upon *his own family*; so hath *Jesus Christ*, by becoming the Son of Man, that is, by a Life and Death of Obedience, gained the power of bestowing blessings upon *all* the families of the earth. And the extraordinary power and effect of Righteousness above Sacrifice, is very plainly revealed in many parts of the old Testament. I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice, says the Prophet *Hosea*; and the Knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings<sup>b</sup>. The prophet *Samuel* says; hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams<sup>c</sup>. *Micah* declares the same thing very strongly; Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings; with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams; or ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born, for my Transgression; the fruit of my Body, for the sin of my Soul? He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee; but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God<sup>d</sup>? *Jeremiah* says expressly; I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of *Egypt*, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying; Obey my voice,

<sup>a</sup> See the *Chaldee* Paraphrase on *Pf.* iv. 5. where it is said, Subdue your Lusts; and it shall be counted to you a sacrifice of Justice or Righteousness. *Pf.* li. 19. *Deut.* xxxiii. 19. *Pf.* iv. 5. Offer sacrifices of Righteousness; and put your Trust in the Lord.

<sup>b</sup> *Hof.* vi. 6.

<sup>c</sup> 1 *Sam.* xv. 22.

<sup>d</sup> *Micah*, vi. 6.

R

and



and I will be your God, and Ye shall be my People: And this superiority of Righteousness to Sacrifice was plainly intimated, in the command that was given to *Moses*, and represented by an outward Symbol; Thou shalt make a plate of pure Gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, Holiness to *Jehovah*; and it shall be upon *Aaron's* forehead, that he may bear, or take-away the Iniquity of the holy things, which the children of *Israel* shall hallow in all their Gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord. Here we see; that it was Holiness, considered as Holiness, and not as any particular act of sacrifice or death, that was to take-away the sins of the holy things; and make-up for the defects of their holy Gifts, or Sacrifices.

But farther, if we consider the death of *Christ* merely in the sense of a *Mosaic* Sacrifice for sin, or even as a *vicarious* Suffering of one person instead of an other; the utmost advantage that can possibly be gained by it, can be no more than the forgiveness of Sin, and a freedom from Punishment; (as I have observed of a literal Ransom:;) which is a most unworthy Notion of the Sacrifice of Righteousness which he made, and for which he was rewarded with power, not only to forgive sin, but to raise the dead, and judge the world in Righteousness, and to give eternal Life to as many as he will. These are Blessings, which extend far beyond the nature of a *Mosaic* or a *vicarious* Sacrifice; and can not be accounted-for upon any such principle.

<sup>a</sup> *Jer. vi. 22. 23.* And several Learned Men understand, that Sacrifices were not originally commanded by God. The ever memorable *John Hales* of *Eaton* says; I confess, the service of God had evermore some ceremony attending it; which to our Fathers before *Christ* may seem to have been necessary, because God commanded it; but let us not deceive ourselves; for neither was Sacrifice then, neither is Ceremony now, esteemed necessary; neither ever was the Command of God concerning it taken to be peremptory, by those to whom it was given.—*St. Chrysostom* on the tenth of the *Hebrews*, denies that God ever from the beginning required, or that it was his Will to ordain, such an outward form of Worship. And asking therefore, *was it impious*; how then seems he to have commanded it? he answers, *avakalalaim* by condescending only, and by submitting himself to human Infirmary. Now this *avakalalaim*, this Condescending of God, wherein it consisted *Oecumenius* opens: for because that men had a conceit, that it was convenient to offer up some part of their substance unto God; and so strongly were they possessed of this conceit, that if they offered it not up unto Him, they would offer it up to Idols; God, saith he, rather than they should offer unto Idols, required them to offer unto Him. And thus was God understood by the holy men themselves, &c. *Hales' sermon on Luk. xviii. 1. p. 204* of his Remains. Is it then possible, that Christianity should be builded upon such a foundation?

<sup>b</sup> *Ex. xxviii. 36.*

From



From all these considerations it seems to appear; that we have no reason to believe, that what *Christ* did and suffered, does exactly and literally answer to an expiatory Sacrifice; rather than to any other image to which it is compared. For the very variety of the comparisons is a proof, that it does not resemble any of them throughout: and indeed it was of such a nature, and had such extraordinary effects; that nothing, which ever before happened, can fully express it. And therefore such allusions, or metaphysical expressions taken from the *Jewish* customs, should not be expected to correspond in every particular: it is sufficient to see the general import and meaning of them.

But what fully proves, that these different expressions cannot be taken in an exact and literal sense; is this—that, if any one of them be literal, not one of the rest can be so. For, if the Suffering of *Christ* be the literal Payment of a debt; and he pays our debt for us, which God was not so merciful as to forgive; then his Death is not literally a Ransom from our captivity to sin and death, nor a vicarious Punishment, nor a propitiatory sacrifice; nor is the debt forgiven *freely* by God, but only transferred from one Person to another, to pay it for us; so that what we once owed to God, we now owe to *Christ*; and, if that be the case, the debt still remains: unless we will venture to say, that *Christ* will forgive, where God the Father will insist upon a recompense and payment.

2. If it be a literal Ransom from captivity; it is no literal Payment of a debt, but a price paid for the liberty of the captive; nor is it a Punishment, nor a Sacrifice, nor is our delivery *gratuitous* [*δωρεάν*].

3. If it be a literal Punishment; it is neither the Payment of a debt, nor a Ransom, nor a Sacrifice, nor are our Sins forgiven us *at all*.

4. If it be a literal Sacrifice, according to the *Mosaic* Law; it is neither the Payment of a debt, nor a Ransom, nor a Punishment, nor can it be a Sacrifice of different kinds at once, in a *literal* sense; but it must be a Sin-offering, or a Peace-offering, or a Passover, &c: and, if it answers to any one of these, it can answer to none of the rest.

5. Lastly, if our Sins are forgiven *freely* [*δωρεάν*]; there can be no literal Payment of a debt, no literal Ransom, no Punishment suffered,



and no Victim slain: for, where a Sacrifice was offered, the Forgiveness was never considered to be gratuitous [*δωρεάν*].

The only sense, in which all these things are consistent, is this; that we are forgiven [*δωρεάν*] *freely*, (that is, the Gift itself is *free*, and arises merely from the Love of God to the World) but the Power of conferring this Happiness upon mankind, was gained by a life and death of Righteousness and Obedience, and *Christ* received it as a Reward; and God forgave us by Him, to the end that we might love, and reverence, and honour the Son, even as we honour the Father: and be influenced, from the consideration of what he has suffered for our sakes, to obey his commands; and become partakers with him in the Kingdom which he has purchased for all his obedient Subjects.

*Christ* therefore was not literally a *Ransom*; but he received power to *ransom* or deliver from Sin and Death: he did not *pay* the debt; but he received power to *forgive* it: he was not *punished*; but he *suffered*; and thereby gained power to *remit* the Punishment: his death was not an Atonement, in the sense of that which influences God to save; but as the means by which God saves: and he did not reconcile God to the World, for God never was at Enmity with it; [for he loved the World] but he reconciled the World to God, by gaining it over to the worship of God, and the practice of Righteousness. And in this sense all these figurative expressions will be consistent; and *Christ* may be said to be a Ransom, and a Sacrifice, and an Atonement, and yet our Sins to be forgiven *freely*, without the Payment of any equivalent, or satisfaction for it.

§ 5. Several other expressions and phrases in Scripture, alluding to the Jewish Cerimonies, are pressed into the service of vicarious Punishment; which it may be proper to mention here. The Prophet *Isaiah* says; he hath borne our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows; which some *Christians* interpret to mean, that Our sins were imputed to Him; and he was charged with them, and punished for them: but the LXX interpret the Words thus; He bare our Sins, and was grieved about us: and St. *Matthew* interprets them of his curing the sick and weak; for having said, he healed those that were sick, he adds; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by *Isaias*



the Prophet, saying; He took our Infirmities, and bare our Sicknesses. Now if the *taking* our Infirmities and *bearing* our Sicknesses does not mean the *suffering* our infirmities and sicknesses in Himself, but only the *bearing them away* or *removing* them from Us; then the bearing our Iniquities may also be understood to signify no more, than the removing away from us our sins and iniquities by forgiveness.

Our Fathers were certainly much mistaking, and so the Prophet tells them; when they esteemed him to be stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted: and some of the *Christians* are now in the same Error; who consider him as punished by God and suffering, in order to vindicate his Laws: but this could not be; because he is declared to be without Spot or Blemish, even at the very time that he suffered, the just for the unjust; and, consequently, he had no Sins to answer for, or bear, in that sense. And besides, it is absurd to suppose; that he could suffer for the Sins of Men, as a guilty Person; because he came down from Heaven, with an ample power to forgive them, and did forgive the Sins of many, even before his death. And, consequently, when it is said, that he bare our sins and our sins were laid upon him; it must be understood in the same sense, as when the Apostle directs us to cast all our Care upon God; or, when the Psalmist says, cast thy Burthen upon the Lord; and He shall sustain thee: Where it does not mean, that God shall be made anxious with our Cares, and feel the weight of our Burthens; but merely, that he shall take them away from us. And thus the word is understood, in many places in Scripture.

The *Christians* seem by these interpretations to confound themselves; by putting forced and unnatural meanings upon phrases, which in common use every body understands in a popular sense.

<sup>h</sup> Mat. viii. 17. <sup>i</sup> Levit. xvi. Without Spot, Heb. ix. 11. Just for the unjust; <sup>1</sup> Pet. i. 19. <sup>1</sup> Christ was once offered to bear the Sins of many. Heb. ix. 28.—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. <sup>1</sup> Ps. liii. 6.—He shall bear their iniquities, verse 11. <sup>m</sup> <sup>n</sup> <sup>1</sup> Pet. v. 7. <sup>2</sup> Ps. lv. 22. Dr. Sykes observes; the words of *Isaiah* [liii. 6.] in the Original signify; the Lord hath made to meet in Him the iniquities of us all: that is, that in Him contempt, pains, want and even ignominious publick death fell to his Lot: or, that he came into the World to suffer all these. What we render *Iniquity*, is in the original, [*Eth Avon*] the Iniquity; or, the treatment of Iniquity. He was treated, as if he had been a great sinner; as if he had been appointed to bear the sufferings of us all. p. 75.

For



For, universally, when a Lord or Master is said to take upon than self the fault or error of his Servant, it has no other meaning than this, that he excuses or forgives it; or, if the fault be committed against a third person, that he will take care the Servant shall not suffer for it: but to carry the letter so far, as to suppose that the Lord himself will suffer the punishment due to the Servant; is carrying the words to an extravagant sense, in which such expressions are never intended to be understood; and especially, if the fault be committed against the Lord or Master, the notion of punishing himself for a fault committed against himself, is absurd; beyond all conception.

1. In short, if the Guilt of our sins was not literally laid on *Christ*, he could not in Justice be literally punished for them; because there can be no just Punishment, but where there is Guilt.

2. As the whole weight of sin consists in the consciousness of it; *Christ* could not bear the weight of our sin, because he could not be conscious of what he was not guilty of.

3. If the Guilt of our sins was literally laid upon him; then he was considered as guilty of them: and, consequently, he could not be without Spot. But the Scripture declares him to be without Spot; and there is no Spot, in a moral sense, but Guilt.

4. If our sins are supposed to have been laid upon *Christ*, in the sense in which the sins of the People were laid upon the Scape-Goat; (which was only symbolical; for the Goat could not be literally guilty of them:) then, he could not be a literal and a legal Sacrifice: for the Scape-Goat was so unclean and unfit for sacrifice, upon this very account; because he bare the sins of the people, though only in a figurative and symbolical sense; that the person who let him go was commanded to wash his Cloaths, and bathe his Flesh in water, before he returned to the camp<sup>r</sup>: and the Goat was called rejectaneous, or refuse<sup>a</sup>. Nothing can therefore be more absurd, and contrary to the genius of the *Mosaic* law, than to believe; that *Christ* was both an expiatory Sacrifice, and yet that he bare our Iniquities either in a literal or symbolical sense; for they are absolutely inconsistent with each other.

In a word, there is no more reason to imagine, when *Christ* sacrificed his Life for the good of *Man*, that he did it to appease the

<sup>r</sup> Levit. xvi. 26.

<sup>a</sup> See Hammond on 1 Cor. iv. 13.



wrath of God; than there is to imagine this to have been the Intent of our Father *Abraham*, when he drew his knife to flay his Son. 'Tis a contradiction to the whole System of *Christianity*; which declares in many places, that God's sending his Son into the World in order to save the World, proceeded from his Love and good will to Man. And there is not a single word, in the whole New Testament; which mentions the least sign of Anger in God against *Jesus Christ*, or Guilt in *Christ*, or Punishment undergone by him.

§ 6. An other Objection which *We* ourselves have formerly made to *Christianity*, is the narrow principles upon which it is founded: which though it comes from one of our Nation with a worse grace than from any other, yet we could not avoid observing it; while almost every *Christian* we conversed with, positively insisted upon the damnation of every one that did not believe the abstrusest points of *Christianity* (and much more *Christianity* itself) in the same way with themselves; and were so sanguine in that persuasion, as to put it into their Creeds: though, it must be owned, this conduct is condemned by some of their own people. Sir *Paul Rycant* observes, very justly; "how can we expect or hope for the conversion of *Turks* or *Heathens*; when they shall be affrighted at the church gate, by some opposites to one another of their own divided persuasions, with the threats of Hell and Damnation; and meet almost as many Anathemas, as when they remained Infidels!"

But here again we have been sadly mistaking; for we shall find upon examination, that *Christianity* was never intended to prejudice either *Jews* or *Heathens*, much less erroneous *Christians*; and is as extensive as the Promise first made to *Abraham*, that in his seed should all the families of the Earth be blessed; and afterwards to *Christ*, that God would make him his Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth. It deprived no other Religion of any advantages it had before; but only added fresh instruction and fresh motives to a virtuous practice: and the Principles upon which it is founded extend to all Mankind; not only those who receive the *Christian* doctrine, but those who never heard of it; as I shall undertake to prove.

And,

• *Jo.* iii. 16. 17. vi. 38. 39. 40. 44. *Acts* iii. 26. *Rom.* iii. 25. v. 8. *Gal.* iv. 4. *Eph.* iii. 2.  
• *Ti.* iii. 4. — *I Jo.* iv. 9. 10. 11. 14. 19.



1. The notion of confining the benefits of *Christ's* death to the Covenants entered into by Circumcision and Baptism, is absolutely contrary to the promise given to *Abraham*; which extended to all the families of the Earth. And as this promise was made before Circumcision, there can be no plea for confining it to those who were circumcised; nor consequently to the *Christians*, who succeeded into their Peculiarity; as keepers of the Oracles of God. For, being prior to such Peculiarity, no Law that was made afterwards could supersede it; as *St. Paul* argues: And had *Abraham* imagined, that the promise given to him in *Isaac*, was to deprive all the rest of his Posterity by *Hagar*, *Keturah*, &c. of eternal Life; he would have looked upon it as the greatest Curse that could have been threaten'd him.

2. Though the *Messiah* was to be born of the line of *Isaac*, and the Oracles of God were committed to that line; yet the Providence of God over mankind is not so confined, nor the Knowledge of the divine Revelations; for these were certainly known to all the family of *Abraham*; and the Angel *Jehovah* appeared to *Hagar* and *Ishmael*; and *Melchisedek* was Priest of the most high God, though no Covenant, that we know of, was ever made with him; and the Prophets of God were sent to *Nineveh*, and *Babylon*, and other Countries. And therefore, when *St. Paul* speaks of the superior advantages of the *Jewish* nation, he never offers to say; that they only, who were in the Covenant by Circumcision, should receive eternal Life: but the chief advantage was this, that unto them were committed the Oracles of God; while the Heathen in the mean time were not acquainted with the benefits which were designed for them, and are therefore said to be left to the uncovenanted Mercies of God; which some *Christians* look-upon as a desperate and forlorn Hope<sup>x</sup>. But the decrees of God are not void and impotent; because they are unknown. The Heathens did not know the decree of God, that they should all arise from the grave<sup>y</sup>;

<sup>x</sup> Compare *Rom. ix. 4.* with *Rom. iii. 2.*

<sup>y</sup> *Rom. iv. 13. Gal. iii. 17.*

<sup>z</sup> *Mrs. Macaulay* quotes the following words from a Speech of *Oliver Cromwell*:—If we deny the spirit of *Jesus Christ* the glory of all his Works, by which he rules Kingdoms; &c. we provoke the Mediator: and he may say—I'll leave you to God—I'll not intercede for you—let him tear you to pieces—I'll leave thee to fall to into God's hands—Thou deniest me my Sovereignty and power committed to me—I'll not intercede and mediate for Thee—Thou fallest into the hands of the living God. *Hist. Vol. 5. p. 150.*

<sup>y</sup> *Matt. xxv. 41.*

and



and yet, this will as certainly come to pass; as if it had been no less plainly reveled to them, than it has been to the *Christians*.

3. The Extent of *Christ's* Mediation is declared in the new Testament to be commensurate to the Promise made to *Abraham*: nor indeed could it be otherwise; being the method by which that Promise is to be completed. *Christ* is declared to be the Propitiation [*ἱλασμός*] for the Sins of the whole World\*. He is called the Saviour of the World<sup>2</sup>; which means the same thing. And by his Righteousness the free Gift came upon all men, unto Justification of Life<sup>3</sup>: He is said by the grace of God to have tasted death for every man<sup>4</sup>; and God is said to be no Respector of Persons<sup>5</sup>; but in every Nation he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him<sup>6</sup>. All this shews plainly, that *Christ* came into the World to save all Mankind; whether *Heathens*, *Jews* or *Christians*: that his Redemption was universal; and, consequently, all men will have eternal Life; who practise Righteousness: *Rom. ix. 9, 10.* for to these he has confined it, by the Terms of Salvation.

4. And this is confirmed by the account, which *Christ* himself gives of the future Judgement. "For the hour is coming, and now is; in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice [the voice of the Son of Man], and shall come forth; they, that have done good, unto the resurrection of Life; and they, that have done evil, unto the resurrection of Damnation<sup>7</sup>." And the same account we find in *St. Matthew*; where the general Judgement is again described: and no distinction made among mankind, whether *Christians*, *Jews*, or *Heathens*; but merely as to their moral Characters. Those, who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, lodged the stranger, clothed the naked, visited the sick and imprisoned, are set on the right hand; and denominated Righteous; and those, who are destitute of these virtues, are set on the left-hand; and denominated Wicked: and, it is declared, without any farther distinction, as the final Sentence; "These shall go into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal<sup>8</sup>."

<sup>2</sup> *Jo. ii. 2.*

<sup>3</sup> *1 Jo. iv. 4.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ro. v. 18.*

<sup>5</sup> *Heb. ii. 9.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ro. ii. 11.*

<sup>7</sup> *Acts i. 35.*

<sup>8</sup> *Jo. v. 28.*

<sup>8</sup> *Mat. xxv. 46.* *Limborch* in his *Amica Collatio*, p. 333. says; If any among the *Gentiles* lived honestly, according to the Law of Nature; It is credible, that a munificent and benevolent God will not leave their Probity unhonoured; and that they will receive some part in a future Life: but what or how great, I cannot pretend to say.



But all these Texts some *Christians* explaine away from a general to a confined Sense. By the Saviour of the *World*, they understand the Saviour of *Christians*; by the free gift coming upon *all Men*, they mean upon *all Christians*; by a propitiation for the sins of the *whole World*, they mean the *World of Believers*. And though they allow, that all Men shall arise from the dead, both Heathens and Christians, to stand before the Judgement seat of *Christ*; yet when it is added, "they who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of Life;" they confine the expression to those only, who are in Covenant with God: and in like manner arbitrarily explaine all other Texts of Scripture upon the subject.

To all which it may be answered: If all the Heathens are redeemed from death by *Christ*; and thereby receive *one* benefit of the *Christian* Covenant, and that a most material one: then the effect of *Christ's* death is not confined to the Covenants; but reaches, in *one* of its main branches, to the whole Heathen World. And, if this be the case, the *Christians* can have no right to confine the effects of it, in its *other* branches; unless they can shew some good Reason, why they presume to do it; and bring some Texts, which shall make a plain exception against the eternal Life of the virtuous Heathens; and prove, that the general expressions already quoted must necessarily be so confined; and that the Heathens are to stand before the Judgement seat of *Christ*, merely to be condemned; without any regard to their actions: but such Texts are no where to be found.

On the contrary; these *Christians*, instead of giving their Reasons why they confine the general words of Scripture, which speak of all mankind, to the *Christians* only; seem to expect, that their opponents shall not only produce these general expressions on their side of the question; but others also of a more particular nature, wherein the eternal Life of the virtuous Heathens is spoken of alone, without being included in such general Terms.

Now this expectation, if we reflect upon it, must appear to be most unreasonable; from the very nature of the thing: Because it could very seldom, if ever, fall in with the purpose of *Christ* or his Apostles, when calling men to enter into the Kingdom of *Christ*, to make any particular mention of the Salvation of those, who should never hear of any such Kingdom: and, when they were



persuading men of the benefits of *Christ's* Revelation, to such as would receive his doctrine; to inform them of the benefits of his Mediation, to such as they were not preaching to. These opportunities could happen very seldom; and the necessity of mentioning it, when it might accidentally fall in, be much less frequent. And therefore, it is no wonder, if the Texts to that purpose should not be numerous; it is more wonderful, that there should be any at all. However, those that we have are sufficiently express; and much more determinate, than could be expected.—

The first that I shall mention is in the Epistle to *Timothy*.

1. "He is the Saviour of *all* Men; especially of those that believe<sup>h</sup>." The Salvation here spoken-of, if we look into the context, hath the promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come; for it refers to that faithful saying, which is contained in the 8th verse. Here then we have a plain Text; in which the blessings of a future Life, though more especially belonging to those that believed, are yet promised to *all* Men; and, consequently, to some who did not believe.

2. This is confirmed by *St. John*. "He is the Propitiation for *our* Sins: and not for *ours* only; but for the Sins of the *whole World*:" upon which I will give you the reasoning of the learned *Robert Barclay*, in his *Apology*. "The way which our adversaries take to evite this Testimony, is most foolish and ridiculous. The World, here, say they, is the *World of Believers*: For this Commentary we have nothing but their own assertion; and so, while it manifestly destroys the Text, may be justly rejected. For, first, let them shew me, if they can, in all the Scripture; where the *whole World* is taken for Believers only: I shall shew them, where it is many times taken for the quite contrary.—As, the *World* knows me not, I am not of this *World*<sup>k</sup>; &c<sup>l</sup>." secondly, the Apostle in this very place contra-distinguisheth the *World* from the *Saints*," thus; "And not for *ours* only, but for the Sins of the *whole World*." What means the Apostle by

<sup>h</sup> 1 *Tim.* iv. 10. See Dr. *Whitby's* note upon this passage.

<sup>i</sup> 1 *Jo.* ii. 2.

<sup>k</sup> 1 *Jo.* v. 19. the whole World lieth in Wickedness. See *Whitby* on 1 *Jo.* ii. 2.

<sup>l</sup> *Psa.* xvii. 14. *Isa.* xlii. 11. *Matt.* xviii. 7. *Jo.* vii. 7. viii. 26. xiii. 19. xiv. 17. xv. 18. 19. xvii. 14. xviii. 20. 1 *Cor.* i. 21. ii. 12. vi. 2. *Gal.* vi. 14. *Ja.* i. 27. 11 *Pet.* ii. 20. 1 *Jn.* ii. 15. iii. 1. iv. 4. 5. and many others.



ours here? is not that the Sins of Believers? was not he one of those Believers? and was not this an universal Epistle, written to all the Saints that then were? So that, according to these men's Comment, there should be a very unnecessary and foolish Redundancy in the Apostle's words; as if he had said, he is the Propitiation not only for the Sins of all Believers; but also for the Sins of all Believers. Is not this to make the Apostle's words void of good sense? Let them shew us, where ever there is such a manner of speaking in all the Scripture; where any of the Penmen first name the Believers *in concreto* with themselves, and then contra-distinguish them from some other *whole World* of Believers: That *whole World*, if it be of Believers, must not be the World we live in. But we need no better interpreter for the Apostle, than himself; who uses the very same expression and phrase, in the same epistle; (ch. v. 19.) saying, We know, that *we* are of God; and the *whole World* lieth in Wickedness. There cannot be found in all the Scripture, two places which run more parallel; seeing in both, the same Apostle, in the same Epistle, to the same Persons, contra-distinguisheth *himself* and the *Saints* to whom he writes, from the *whole World*; which, according to these men's Commentary, ought to be understood of Believers: as if *John* had said; we know, that *particular* believers are of God; but the *whole World* of believers lieth in wickedness. What absurd wresting of Scripture is this? and yet it may as well be pleaded-for, as the other; for they differ not at all. Seeing then that the Apostle *John* tells us planely; that *Christ* not only died for *Him*, and for the Saints and Members of the Church of God to whom he wrote; but for the whole World: let us then hold it for a certain and undoubted Truth; notwithstanding the Cavils of such as oppose<sup>m</sup>.

To this I shall add the Words and Reasoning of St. *Paul*, in the second Chapter to the *Romans*<sup>n</sup>. "God will render to every Man, according to his Deeds: to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal Life:" and again; "glory and honour and peace, to every one that worketh good; to the *Jew* first, and also to the *Gentile*: for there is no Respect of Persons with God. &c." The Apostle does not speak

<sup>m</sup> Barclay's Apol. p. 123, &c.

<sup>n</sup> Ro. ii. 6, &c. 11, &c. 14.



here of the *Gentiles*, who have received the Gospel; but of those who having no [reveled] Law, were a Law unto themselves: (verse 14) of whom he declares, that by patient continuance in well-doing they shall receive eternal Life (ver. 6. 7. 11). The Argument relates to the *Jews* and *Heathens*, while they continued such; and proves, that if the Uncircumcision keep the Law, it shall be counted for Circumcision: (ver. 26.) and the reason he gives is, because they do by Nature (the same Nature which they received from God) the things contained in the Law; and it will not be the hearers of the Law, but the doers of the Law, that will be justified: (verse 13.) and, if that be the case, there can be no question, but the virtuous *Heathen* shall receive the same Reward as the virtuous *Christian*; especially, as they will be both judged by the same Rule. For the Uncircumcision (which St. *Paul* here speaks of as keeping the Law; that is, the moral Law, or the Law of Reason and Nature; verse 15.) being counted for Circumcision, can mean no less than being entitled to the benefits of the Covenant; and, consequently, the virtuous *Heathen* will be equally rewarded with eternal Life, as the virtuous *Christian*.

Mr. *Barclay*, just quoted, argues thus unanswerably°. In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted: but many of the *Heathens* feared God, and worked Righteousness: therefore many of the *Heathens* are accepted.

The *Minor* he proves, from the example of *Cornelius*; and farther thus. He, that *doth* the things contained in the Law; feareth God, and worketh Righteousness: but the *Heathens* *did* the things contained in the Law: therefore they feared God, and worked Righteousness.—Again; he argues, from the 13th verse; without adding a word of his own, as he observes. “The *doers* of the Law shall be justified: but the *Gentiles* *do* the things contained in the Law: therefore the *Gentiles* shall be justified.”

§ 7. But to all these declarations of *Christ* and his Apostles, it is objected by some; that our Salvation, or the terms of our Acceptance, do not depend upon our Actions; but upon our *Faith*: and, to prove this, they quote the following Text—“He, that *believeth* and is baptized, shall be saved; but He, that *believeth* not, shall be damned”.

° *Barclay*, p. 188. 189.

† *Mark* xvi. 16.



I shall first prove, from the reason and nature of the thing, that this Conclusion must be false: and then shew, that the Text here quoted, does not relate to a future Judgement; but to the admission of the *Christian* Converts in the Church of *Christ* on Earth.

And first I argue; that, if *Adam* had not sinned, eternal Life would have been the reward of his Righteousness; for Death entered by Sin, and without Sin there would have been no such thing; and no other Faith would have been necessary, but a belief in God; and the belief in *Christ* became necessary, not as an End; but a Means to bring us back to the practice of Righteousness, upon which eternal Life was at first promised to *Adam*: And therefore, as the End is superior to the Means, so Righteousness or Obedience is superior to Faith in *Christ*. And, accordingly, though Righteousness, without Faith in *Christ*, had the promise of eternal Life annexed to it; as in the instance of *Adam*; yet Faith, without Righteousness, can have no such Privilege; because at the end of the world the Son of Man shall send forth his Angels, and shall gather out of his Kingdom all Scandals, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of Fire: *Matt. xiii. 41, 42.* [And this will be the fate of some; whose Faith was so great, as not only to admit them into the *Christian* Church; but to work Miracles in the name of *Christ*:] and he shall say; depart from me, all ye workers of Iniquity. In all such, their Faith will be so far from saving them<sup>a</sup>; that it will aggravate their condemnation, because they knew their Master's will and did it not.

If it be urged, that *Abraham* was saved by Faith; *St. James* has given the answer, that "by Works was his Faith made perfect<sup>b</sup>;" and that which makes perfect is of a superior quality: so that Righteousness is superior to Faith, as Holiness to the Lord was superior to Sacrifice, and made-up for the defects of it<sup>c</sup>. The Faith of *Abraham* consisted not merely in believing God, but in obeying him; as appears from the several instances which the Apostle gives of it, when he describes it as most highly meritorious. "By Faith *Abraham*, when he was called to go into a place which he should hereafter receive for an inheritance, obey'd<sup>d</sup>—by Faith he

<sup>a</sup> When the Word *Salvation* in the new Testament means no more than an Entrance into the *Christian* Church, nothing more is necessary to it than Faith: but when *Salvation* means eternal Life, Faith is never spoken-of in the Scriptures as sufficient; but the Obedience of Faith: as in *Rom. xvi. 26.* See *Taylor on the Romans*, p. 97.

<sup>b</sup> *Jam. ii. 22.*

<sup>c</sup> *Exod. xxviii. 36.*

<sup>d</sup> *Heb. xi. 8. 9. 17.*



sojourned in the land of Promise—by Faith, when he was tried, he offered up his Son *Isaac*: and therefore St. *James* says, he was justified by *Works*<sup>1</sup>: and St. *Paul's* argument comes to the same Conclusion at last; for he tells us, that his *Faith* was counted to him for *Righteousness*<sup>2</sup>; which is a plane concession, that it was his *Righteousness* that was rewarded; and that *Righteousness* is superior to *Faith*. For, if it were not so, the accounting his *Faith* for *Righteousness*, would not have been a Favour to him; but an Injury.

If the Text be urged, which says—“the Just shall live by Faith”<sup>3</sup>—the answer is, that it is a false Translation; and it should have been, the Just by Faith shall live. The Context shews this to be the Sense of it; being thus connected—The Just by Faith shall live; for the wrath of God is reveled from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth [that is, the true Faith] in unrighteousness. Here we find; that those, who are just by Faith, or whose Faith prevales on them to be just, shall live: but, on the other hand, those who hold the true Faith without that influence upon their conduct, shall suffer the wrath of God which is reveled against all such. This is a plane Argument; and, agreably to this sense of it, the Apostle gives us a large Catalogue of such as had become righteous by their Faith. And thus the Text is interpreted by *Clemens Romanus*<sup>4</sup>; but, in the *English* translation, this sense of the words is lost.

But, whatever reward the Faith of *Abraham* receiv'd; by being accounted to him for *Righteousness*, which it brought forth; it was certainly no belief in any thing that was reveled by *Christ*, but a belief and obedience to God: And this was the Faith of the virtuous Heathens, and produced the same Effect; that is, Obedience. The belief of a God from the evidence of his Works, was the Faith of the wiser Heathens; and this, together with a belief of the particular Revelation which he received from God, was the Faith of *Abraham*; and the belief of the *Christian* Revelation is the Faith of a *Christian*. Each of these believe all that can be expected from them, upon the Evidence

<sup>1</sup> *Ja.* ii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Gen.* xv. 6. *Gal.* iii. 6. *Ro.* iv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ro.* i. 17. ὁ δὲ δικαίος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. *Gal.* iii. 2. *Heb.* x. 38. *Heb.* ii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Corin.* Ox. Ed. 1669. p. 71. τίνας χάριν εὐλογηθὲν ἅ πατρὶς Ἀβραάμ; ὅχι δικαιοσύνην καὶ αἰλήθειαν διὰ πίστεως ποιήσας;

that



that God has laid before them; and the intrinsic Virtue of *Faith* can consist in nothing else, but a Readiness to believe and practise whatever appears upon good Evidence to be reveled by *Him*. And therefore *Christ* resolves all Faith in *Him* into a belief in *God*: He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on him that sent Me<sup>a</sup>: which it is certain *Christ* would not have said, if Faith in *Him* had been more meritorious than Faith in *God*. And to the same purpose he says; verily, verily, I say unto you; he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting Life; and shall not come into Condemnation, but hath passed from Death unto Life<sup>b</sup>: where again we see, that Faith in *God* is spoken of, as having the same effect with Faith in *Christ*. And in this Faith or Belief in *God*, there were many of the virtuous Heathens who were by no means deficient. I shall only mention the Faith of *Socrates*.

"This is that *Socrates*, says *Ludovicus Vives*<sup>c</sup>, of whom nothing can be sufficiently said for his Dignity; who, as is manifest, was the wisest of all the *Greeks*; and came nearest to the *Christian* Wisdom. He was a man temperate, chaste, just, modest, patient of injuries, not greedy of riches, pleasures, no nor of glory." *Justin Martyr* does not scruple to call him a *Christian*; saying, all such as lived according to the divine word in them, which was in all men, (*Jo. i. 9.*) were *Christians*; such as *Socrates*, and *Heracitus*, and others among the *Greeks*.

*Xenophon*, who was also an excellent man, hath given us this account of the Faith of *Socrates*; he believed, that the Providence of *God* extended over all things; and directed every thing, as he pleased<sup>d</sup>: and that it is our Duty, to worship him; and the most acceptable Worship that can be paid to him is an Obedience to his commands<sup>e</sup>: and that he, who strives with all his power to please him, hath good reason to take courage; and expect the greatest blessings from him<sup>f</sup>. This Faith agrees entirely with the description which *St. Paul* hath given us, of that Faith which is necessary to please *God*. Without Faith, says he, it is impossible to please *God*; for he, that cometh unto *God*, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him<sup>g</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> *Jo. xii. 44.*<sup>b</sup> *Jo. v. 24.*<sup>c</sup> *Xenoph. Mem. 1. 4. 17. 18.*<sup>d</sup> *Ib. 4. 3. 16.*<sup>e</sup> in *Aug. de Civ. Dei, L. viii. c. 2.*<sup>f</sup> *Ib. 17.*<sup>g</sup> *Heb. xi. 6.*

Now



Now, as no reason can be given; why Faith in God the *Father* is not of as great merit, as Faith in God the *Son*; it remains, that the Righteousness of *Socrates*, which arose from Faith in God, will be as highly rewarded; as the same degree of Righteousness, which arises from Faith in *Christ*. Most certainly it (can be no good reason, why it should obtain a less reward; *merely* that it attained to the same perfection, under greater difficulties and disadvantages.

Mr. *Chillingworth* argues, as follows. "If, without this belief, that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him; God will not be pleased; then his Will is, that we should believe it: now, it is possible; that they, who never heard of *Christ*, may seek God: therefore, it is true; that even they shall please him, and be rewarded by him." And however Mr. *Chillingworth* uses this argument only with respect to such, as are brought to the Faith afterwards; it equally concludes for those, who never heard of *Christ*. And it is equally absurd to imagine; because the Heathens are spoken of in general, as at enmity with God; that therefore every individual, such as *Socrates*, *Alexander*, *Kenophon*, *Marcus Antoninus*, &c. must have been at enmity with him; as to imagine, every individual among the *Jews* and *Christians* is *holy*; because they are called collectively a *holy* people.

There remains to be considered the Text, which is quoted, on the other side of the question, from the Gospel of St. *Mark*; "He, that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he, that believeth not, shall be damned." These words, though so often applied to a future Judgement, do not appear to have any relation to it; but only to the Admission of the *Christian* Converts into the *Christian* Church, after *Christ*'s ascension; upon the same Terms as he admitted them himself. *Christ* was now leaving this World; and giving Commission to his Disciples what to do after his departure from them. In which Commission we find he gives Them the same powers, which He himself had exercised; and orders them to use them in the same manner. He tells them to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every Creature; and adds, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.

Now the first part of this Text [he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved] answers directly to the declaration of forgiveness to

\* *Relig. of Prot.* ch. iii. sect. 13.

<sup>b</sup> *Mark*, xvi. 16.



all such as believed in him, (upon their receiving him as the *Messiah*;) when, upon their Conversion, their Sins were immediately forgiven them: and to the very design of the Gospel; which was to reconcile the World to God, by declaring his good-will to men in forgiving their Iniquities. (Ro. iii. 25.) And it was equivalent to the expression used by *Christ* to a certain woman that believed on him; and at other times; "thy *Faith* hath saved thee; go in Peace<sup>k</sup>." And the latter part of the verse; [he that believeth not shall be damned; that is, condemned or accountable for his Sins;] answers to the denunciation, which *Christ* had often made against those who would not receive him; that they should die in their Sins. Thus the Evangelist recites the words of *Christ* to *Nicodemus*: He that believeth on him, (the son of God) is not condemned; (οὐ κέκρίται) but he that believeth not, is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God<sup>l</sup>. And what this Damnation, or Condemnation, was; we see *John* viii. 24. I said therefore unto you, ye shall die in your Sins: and this is the only sense the words are capable of, consistent with the Context, with the Subject that *Christ* was speaking to; and with the other parts of the Gospel. And the same seems to be the sense of those other Texts, which have made so much noise and disturbance in the *Christian* Church; "whose Sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose Sins ye retain, they are retained<sup>m</sup>:" and again "I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," says *Christ* to *Peter*; "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven<sup>n</sup>." All these Texts relate to the same point and purpose; viz. to declare that, upon the first receiving the *Christian* Religion, *Christ*, and afterwards the Apostles in his name, forgave those that believed, and were baptized; and what was then done here, would be confirmed in Heaven: but they have no relation at all to their acquittal or condemnation at the day of Judgement; at which time, every man will be judged according to his Works; and according to what he hath received.

§ 8. But here it has been argued, by the enemies of Revelation; (such is the perverseness of Mankind!) that, if every man will be judged according to what he hath received; then every man will be

<sup>l</sup> Mark, iv. 12. Matt. ix. 2. &c.

<sup>k</sup> Luk. vii. 5. Matt. ix. 22. &c.

<sup>m</sup> Jo. iii. 18, &c. v. 24.

<sup>n</sup> Jo. xx. 23.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xvi. 19.

equality.



equally well pleasing to God, who does as well as he can; or is equally *sincere*; and, consequently, will be equally rewarded; whether with or without a Revelation. *Answer*: There is no doubt, but that he who has performed his Duty, according to the best Light he can procure; beyond which Man can not go, nor God demand his service; will gain the favour of God, and be accepted by him; but no reason can be drawn from hence, to prove; that an other, who has greater abilities and opportunities, and has by the proper use of them done more good and acceptable works, and has actually carried on the designs of God more punctually and perfectly; will not thereby deserve a greater Reward, and receive according to his real work and labour. If this were not the case, "all the Writings of Philosophers and Morahsts, all the Instructions that have been ever given to Mankind, in matters of Religion and Morality; would have been perfectly needless, and of no use." Nay, the case would be better with the most ignorant Savages, than the most enlighten'd *Christians*; for the latter would be liable to severer punishment, if they neglected their duties; and yet entitled to no greater a reward, if they performed them. But the Truth is, far otherwise: for, though Sincerity recommends all men to the favour of God, whether their Abilities and Talents be more or less; yet it by no means prevents a Variety of Stations and Rewards; because we shall be judged according to our Works, or the actual Use we have made of our superior Talents. And therefore it must be of infinite Consequence for us to be rightly informed of the Will of God; that we may the better know how to please him. For it is the Knowledge of the Truth, with regard to the Being, Attributes and Providence of God, and the nature of moral Rectitude, and moral Obligation; which gives life and activity to that very Sincerity, upon which our acceptance with God is founded; and it is by the regular and constant practise of those Principles of Truth and Righteousness, which we know or believe; that we improve in moral Excellence, and attain to a praise-worthy Character.

The knowledge of *Christianity* was therefore of greater use to those to whom it was reveled, than can be easily conceived; as they were thereby delivered out of a state of Darkness, Ignorance, and

*See Headly's answer to Ware, in the Post, to the Bp. of Oxf. p. 229. Octavo Ed.*  
*Letter's View, &c. vol. I. p. 158.*



Superstition, into a marvellous Light, with regard to the Unity of God, and his moral Attributes, and the history of his Providence, and the nature of moral Perfection, and the promise of eternal Life to the Righteous.

I envy not the powers of mind, how great soever, which the Heathen Philosophers enjoyed: they were of great service to Virtue without doubt, as far as they were studied and understood; and made the world more inquisitive after Truth, and more capable of examining into the worth and dignity of the Christian Revelation. But they neither preached the true doctrine of the one God, nor had they a complete notion of Morality, nor authority to enjoin the practice of it upon substantial motives; nor liberty to preach what they believed; nor could their doctrines have reached to the bulk of Mankind; for the established Religion was a Contradiction to their Philosophy: and there was no likelihood of their reforming the Notions, or amending the Practice, of the common people; while the Gods they worshipped were looked upon to be such monsters of Immorality of every kind; and even the Philosophers themselves agreed in the outward forms of worship, and in the general Maxim, that the Religion of the Country should always be complied with. These defects remained to be supplied by a divine Revelation.

And the plain History of God's Providence over Mankind from the beginning of the world, gave men, at one view, a Love and Admiration of his Perfections; and a sovereign Contempt of the Heathen Deities, and all their Imperfections. And whatever had been said by their best Writers upon the nature of moral Duties, fell infinitely short of that perfection of Goodness, in the example which Christ has set before us; in leaving the glory and happiness of Heaven, and humbling himself to take upon him the form of a Servant, and to suffer indignity, pain and death, for our Salvation. For why? this Conduct did not arise from the sense of moral Obligation, but from the more noble principle of Benevolence and Love.

As these things gave men a more exalted notion of Virtue and Goodness; so the motives to live according to this more perfect exemplar, were more powerful, than any that could be collected from Philosophy; and enabled them to go through all Trials and Difficulties,



Difficulties, in order to propagate the Truth. The Philosophers did not know, whether eternal Life was to be the lot of pious men; whether it was the original Design of God, when he created the world; nor whether they should obtain it by a virtuous Life: They did know, that it would not follow from his Justice; because no man had merited it: and their notion of his Goodness was very confused. Whereas in the Christian Revelation we find; that a future State and kingdom was the original design of God, when he created us; and that he hath constituted Jesus Christ to be the Lord and King of it; in which he will reward his sincere followers with life and happiness. The knowledge of these things hath connected our Duty with our Interest; a thing so much wanted among the Heathens, to give life and energy to their virtuous Principles: and the Certainty of a Resurrection to Life, the most powerful of all motives to a virtuous Practice; (the bare Hope of which among them depended entirely upon uncertain conclusions from more uncertain premises) is become among the Christians an undoubted article of Faith; founded upon plain Fact, and consequently level to the apprehension of all men; and made the grand and universal Motive of Religious Conduct: so that, though God winked at the former times of Ignorance; yet, when he revealed to the Heathens, that he had appointed a day, in which he would judge the world in righteousness; he at the same time supplied them with a clearer notion of moral Excellence, than they had before; and with stronger motives to the practice of Virtue.

Who can read without Emotion the dying words of Socrates, the greatest Light of the Heathens, upon this subject? "I have great hopes, says he; that it is better for me, to be condemned to die: For either Death deprives us of all Thought, or it is the passage to another Country. If it be merely a privation of Sense, like a sound and unmolested Sleep; then Death is Gain: for how few Days are preferable to such a Night; but if it be a passage into the regions which are inhabited by those, who have passed through life; and we shall there meet with such, as have lived piously and justly; how delightful is the thought of such a Journey! What a Pleasure to mix with such a Society! Surely I would go through many Deaths, to experience this Truth." How noble and generous are these sentiments! But, when St. Paul considers the same Subject, with what superior Majesty



Majesty does the Scene open; and discover to our view, without the least appearance of doubt to cast a shade upon any part of it, the enlivening Prospect of Glory and Honour and Immortality within our Reach?—We are come, says he, to the City of the living God, the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and to an innumerable Company of Angels; to the general Assembly and Church of the first-born, which are enrolled in Heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the Spirits of just men made perfect; and to *Jesus*, the Mediator of the new Covenant. *Heb. xii.*

§ 8. But, in answer to all that can be said in favour of *Christianity*, as designed and calculated to improve Mankind; the Deists have formed two of their most capital Objections. If God, say they, was always willing that all Men should be saved; and *Christ* came into the World, to reform it from its Errors, and introduce Virtue and Righteousness; how comes it to pass, that we see no such Reformation made; but the *Christians* are as bad as other men? Or, if it be said, that *Christianity* has produced such an extraordinary effect; then, Why was not the *Christian* Revelation given sooner? why has it made so little progress in the world? why was it not universal? how could those be reformed and saved by *Christ*, who never heard of him?

1. If *Christ* came into the world to reform it, and introduce Virtue and Righteousness; this, they allow, would have been a noble Scheme indeed: but where, say they, is there any appearance of such an extraordinary effect upon the conduct of the *Christians*? we don't see, that they are better than other Men. What good then hath the death of *Christ* done; if the World is no better than it was before?

I shall not stay here to examine, whether this be a true or a false representation of the *Fact*; but only observe that, if the World is not improved by the *Christian* Revelation, it is entirely owing to their not observing its Precepts; and, that all arguments against Revelation, founded upon the supposition that it was designed to make men virtuous, and hath not done so; and, therefore, could not come from God; may be as strongly urged against Reason, as against Revelation: and, consequently, they are not the proper Objections of a *Deist*; but of an *Atheist*. However, let the Objection come from the one or the other, it is equally weak and



and trifling. God Almighty reveles himself to Men, as to rational Beings and moral Agents; capable of receiving and making a proper use of this, as well as all his other blessings; but, if they will not make use of them to the purpose for which he designed them, and to which their own understanding was able to have directed them; what can be more trifling than to urge this as a proof, that God did not send them such blessings; or that he did not send them to such ends and uses. Has a man no Eyes, or no Understanding; whenever he refuses to make use of them?

The Assertion, that God was always willing that all Men should be saved, and that all Men should come to the knowledge of the Truth, &c. if taken in an absolute sense; as if God was willing that all Men should be saved, whether they would obey his commands or not; and that all Men should come to the knowledge of the Truth, whether they would receive his instruction or not; is a false representation of things. God never designed that any should be saved, or come to the knowledge of the Truth; but those, who would use the proper means to that end, when he had put it into their power. Again; where does the Deist find in Scripture, in what degree *Christ* was, at his first coming, to make a Reformation of Mankind; or how far it was to extend, in any given time; that he should pretend to avail himself of such knowledge, and conclude that the End of his coming into the world has not been fulfilled? God, no doubt, designed his Prophecies concerning the Person and Character of the *Messiah*, to be the ground of our Faith in him, when he should come; and yet, when he was now soon to appear, what says the Prophet *Isaiab*?—Who hath believed our Report?—And, in like manner, though *Christ* has reveled the will of God, and given the strongest Evidence to the divinity of his Mission; yet the Scripture never gives us the least intimation, that the World shall be so improved by it, as to be ready to receive Him, at his *second* appearance: on the contrary, *Christ* himself questions, whether, when the son of Man cometh, he shall find Faith on the earth; the force of all this Evidence will, by the carelessness and folly and wickedness of Men, be so far impaired and lost. The *first* coming of *Christ*, considered merely as to the Revelation then given, was of the same Nature with former Revelations; and still continues to have its effect upon all, who



who sincerely believe it; be the number great or small: but it was never designed to reform and amend those, who would not receive it. And *Christ* himself has taught us, by his Prophet; how to reason properly upon this Subject, and not be discouraged at Appearances; when he laments the ill Success of his own Ministry, and then informs us of its happy Consequences. “Then I said, I have laboured in vain; I have spent my Strength for naught, and in vain: yet, surely, my judgement is with the Lord; and my work with my God. And now saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his Servant, to bring *Jacob* again to him; though *Israel* be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord; and my God shall be my strength. And he said; it is a light thing that thou shouldst be my Servant, to raise up the tribes of *Jacob*, and to restore the preserved of *Israel*; I will give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayst be my Salvation unto the ends of the Earth.—Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship,” &c.<sup>9</sup>

But was the Reformation of the world the *only*, or even the *chief* End, for which *Christ* came and died? an end, that might, for any thing that appears, have been as fully completed by his sitting upon the throne of *David*, and sending forth his laws to all the earth with Power and Authority; as he will probably do, at his *second* coming to restore the Theocracy? or does the new Testament teach us, that a single Person will be saved by an exact Obedience to what he taught us? so far from it; that it assures us, our Salvation depends upon the Righteousness of *Christ*; and the Power he received, in reward of it, to dispense Salvation as a free Gift: For it is *Christ* alone, that gives eternal Life; our own Righteousness only renders us fit objects of that free Gift.

The *chief* end of *Christ*'s Humiliation and Death was not, therefore, so immediately for the sake of what he reveled; as of what he performed: not so much to reform the world by what he then preached, as to consummate the Prophet; and thereby gain to himself those powers, by which he became a Prince and a Saviour; and upon which the Accomplishment of all the extraordinary Prophecies of the happy state of the Church in future ages,



to which the Prophecy of *Isaiah* just quoted particularly relates, entirely depend: and there are millions of Souls, who will be brought to Happiness by him, as a *Prince* and a *Saviour*; who never heard of him, as a *Prophet*; nor of any of his Revelations. And accordingly, Sir *Isaac Newton*\* clearly distinguishes between the things that were to be done at the first and second Coming of *Christ*. "In the first, he comes as a *Prophet*; in the second, as a *King*: in the first, the *Prophet* was consummated, and the most holy anointed; in the second, he comes to be a *Prince* and reign:" to which may be added; in the first, he came to merit and gain the powers necessary to constitute him a *Saviour*; in the second, he will come to exercise and employ those Powers: and the latter character of a *Prince* and *King*, is the Reward of his actions as a *Prophet*. "And as the few and obscure Prophecies concerning *Christ's first* coming, were for setting-up the *Christian* Religion, which all Nations have since corrupted; so the many and clear Prophecies concerning the things to be done at his *second* coming, are not only for predicting, but also for effecting, a Recovery of the long lost Truth; and setting-up a Kingdom, wherein dwelleth Righteousness." And therefore, when the *Deists* insult the *Christians* with such kind of questions; what benefit have the Death and Sufferings of *Christ* procured, adequate to the extraordinary Nature of such an Event; if the World is not reformed by it? they are making Objections upon a subject, which they are wholly unacquainted with: they expect those things to be done, at his first coming in the *Flesh*; which are to be brought about by the completion of the Prophecies not yet fulfilled, which relate to his coming in the Clouds of Heaven; and those things to be completed by him, as a *Prophet*; which are to be accomplished by him, as a *Prince* and *King*: and, in considering the end and design of his first appearance in the state of Humility and Affliction, overlook the powers which he then gained by his meritorious Death and Sufferings; upon which the immediate Salvation of righteous men entirely depends. So little do they know of the *Christian* Doctrines they oppose.

As to the second Question; Why was not the *Christian* Revelation given sooner? why was it not universal? and why has it made

\* Sir *Isaac Newton* on the Prophecies, p. 132.

\* Sir *Isaac Newton*, p. 252.



so little Progress in the world? and how can those be saved by *Christ*, who never heard of him? &c.—let the *Deist* consider; that the Salvation of Men does not depend upon the Extent of the *Christian* Revelation, nor upon the Success of it, nor *when* it happened, or *where*; but upon the extent of *Christ's* Power, by which he became mighty to save. The *Redemption* is *universal*; though the *Revelation* is not: and the *Salvation* will extend to all, that shall be fit to receive it. The Prophets, who came before *Christ*, declared the Will of God; and called men to Repentance, and the Practice of moral duties; as He did: and so did the Philosophers; who were raised-up by God to instruct Mankind: but They were not Saviours; for they wanted power to forgive and save. The Characters, therefore, are entirely different: and, as the *Prophets* were not *Saviours*; so we see, by the *partiality* of the Revelation, that, if it had pleased God, the *Messiah* might have been a *Saviour*; without being a *Prophet*. For, had he never given us any Laws at all, nor ever appeared in this World, nor revealed any thing concerning himself to any part of Mankind; but we had lived as intirely ignorant of Him, as the *Patagonians*; yet, had he manifested a like Obedience to God in any other part of the Universe, and been thereupon rewarded and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour of Mankind; our Salvation at the day of Judgement might be accomplished in the same manner, as to the *efficient* cause, as it will be now; that is, by the exercise of those powers which he received, for that purpose, in reward of his Merits: and the effect of his Mediation might be *universal*, as it is now.

We might indeed be very much alarmed; if we imagined the Salvation, which *Christ* brings, should reach no farther than his Revelation does: which was so many years before it came, and which all Nations have since corrupted, and which has made so little progress in the World for many ages, since the rise of the grand Apostasy. But as we are not saved by his Revelation, as a Prophet; but by his Power, as a King; the case is very different: and it does not avail, at what Age of the world, or in what Part of it, he by his Obedience gained the power of raising the dead, forgiving sin, and giving eternal Life; but upon his actual employment of that Power for our Salvation at the last day. So that though (in a restrained Sense, as I observed) it be true, that God was



was always willing, that all Men should be saved; yet a Revelation at all times, and in all places, was by no means necessary to that end. For, though *Christ* did not come into the world to suffer, till 4000 years after the Fall; yet the Power of his Salvation, which he gained by his Obedience when he *did* come, will be manifested at the last day over *all* ages and nations, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him, and the promise made to *Abraham* fulfilled in the full extent of the words; though the Revelation given by God at sundry times, and in diverse manners, be ever so much confined by the Perverseness of mankind; or ever so much corrupted. And if the Deists in *this* Country would compare their own happy state, in regard to the many comforts they enjoy, superior to the miserable inhabitants of some *other* parts of the World; as well as in their Knowledge of *natural* Religion and *moral* Obligation; they would see, how absurd it is to imagine; that God has not a special right to bestow his blessings and free gifts upon different Nations or Societies of men, as he pleases; whether they will make a proper use of such Advantages, or no: or to cavil at the Providence of God; because a farther Knowledge of the methods of his Government, and nobler Principles of action and motives to Virtue, are revealed to *some* Men than to *others*.

But, while the *Deists* object to the superior Advantages of the *Christians* over the rest of Mankind, as being inconsistent with the impartiality of Providence; it must surely be absurd at the same time to object, that it is in the power of the *Christians* to lose those Advantages by their own neglect or wickedness; and so reduce themselves to a level with other Men. God cannot be expected to force his blessings upon them; whether they will or no. And,

The Causes, why *Christianity* has been lost in several parts of the world where it was once received; and not received in others, where it has been preached; are chiefly these two: first, the Corruption of its Doctrines; and secondly, the Wickedness of its Professors.

I. The Corruption of its Doctrines, as *Cyril* relates, was objected to the *Christians*, by the Emperor *Julian*, but a few years after the Council of *Nice*, in these Words; "Your adding to that *ancient* dead Man *Jesus*, many *new* dead Men, who can sufficiently abomi-



nate?" And again; "if *Christians* had adhered to the precepts of the *Hebrews*; they would have worshipped *one* God, instead of *many*: and not a Man, or rather *many* unhappy Men. And he accuses them, that they adored the Wood of the Cross; making figures of it on their Foreheads, and before their Houses<sup>a</sup>. And in the days of *Cyril* we find, that the Virgin *Mary* was called the Queen of Heaven, and the Mother of God; and so decreed to be, in the Councils of *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*; which are Tests of Heresy in *England*: And *Cyril* himself, who is said to have presided at the Council of *Ephesus*, made no Scruple to call Her the Complement or Supplement of the Holy Trinity; and the *Collyridians* worshipped her as God; and said, there were two Gods besides the Father; viz. *Christ* and the Virgin *Mary*<sup>b</sup>.

And the Impostor *Mahomet* not only objects to the *Christians*, that they associated their Doctors and Monks with Almighty God in their Worship: but he also accuses them of corrupting the Doctrine of the *Unity*, the fundamental Article of all true Religion; by their notions of the *Trinity*<sup>c</sup>. And it must be confessed; that the *Christians* have at least so far obscured and unfetted this great Truth, by the decrees of their Councils; that many of the Learned, both ancient and modern, have been at a loss to know; whether they worship *one* Thing, or *three*; ἐν πρᾶσι or τρία πράγματα<sup>d</sup>. For, in order to maintain the doctrine of the divine Fecundity, as it was settled at the Council of *Nice*; we are told, that God is not *unicus*, (the only God); but only *unus* (one God): that this *Unity* is of so transcendental a nature, as not to come under Number<sup>e</sup>; and that God is not one in *Number*, but only in *Nature*<sup>f</sup>. Other *Christians*, on the other hand, declare; that God is one, both in *Number*, and in *Nature*; one numerical Substance, consisting of the Father Son and Holy Ghost: which *Athanasius* and *Epiphanius* declare to be *Sabellianism*<sup>g</sup>. Others say; that God is *three* Substances, joined together inseparably by an *Emperichoresis*; and that, if it was not for this *Emperichoresis*, there would be *three* Gods; and that no one of

<sup>a</sup> Sir *Isaac Newton* on the Prophecies, p. 208.

<sup>b</sup> Four Treatises, p. 174. *Epiph. Hær.* 75: 7. Lib. iii. *Salé's Koran*, p. 35.

<sup>c</sup> See Lett. I. p. 6.

<sup>d</sup> Lett. I. p. 32.

<sup>e</sup> *Allix, Jew: Ch.* 121. 168.

<sup>f</sup> *Basil*, and *Justin Martyr*. See Letter I. p. 91. These Writers mean'd to oppose the *Sabellian* Notion of *one* numerical substance: by maintaining *three* numerical substances of the same generical Nature; as, three Men are *one* in Nature, though *three* in Number.

<sup>g</sup> Lett. I. Note viii. p. 90.

them:



them is God, exclusive of the other two: (and, if this be true, it must follow unavoidably; that, without this *Emperichorefsis*, there would be no God at all:) and thus the very *Being* of God, as well as his *Unity*, is supposed to depend upon—we know not what—most certainly upon what does not come under our Idea of necessary Existence: and this, we are told by the Learned, was the doctrine of the *Nicene Council*. But others, in direct opposition to this, declare; that *every one* of them is of himself both God and Lord<sup>d</sup>: which is condemned by *Athanasius*, *Bull*, *Petavius*, &c. as being Polytheism. *Athanasius* says; We do not acknowledge three *Hypostases*, divided or separate by themselves; that we may not comply with the Pagan Polytheism<sup>e</sup>. And some Divines have drawn the line of their Orthodoxy so nicely, as to assert; that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are *three*, and every one *distinctly* God; and yet deny that they are *three*, and every one *a distinct* God<sup>z</sup>. These different Notions were brought into the Church, at different Times; as the *Sabellian*, *Athanasian*, or *Pseudo-Athanasian* Heresies prevailed; and are all of them established together, in some of the *Christian Churches*; as if they were all orthodox, and consistent with one another. The *first*, by the Council of *Lateran*<sup>c</sup>, and by the second and fourth Articles agreed upon at *London* in 1562, and by the *proper Preface* in the Communion Service for *Trinity Sunday*: the *second* of them, by making the four first general Councils the Tests of Heresy<sup>f</sup>: and the *third*, by the *Pseudo-Athanasian Creed*: for it seems to be a kind of Infatuation among the *Christians*, if it does not procede from mere Carelessness; that there is not one of the Western Churches, but what pretends to follow the Faith of *Athanasius*; and yet they are every one of them condemned by him, (in their Principles,) as *Sabellians* and *Polytheists*.—The Confusion and Uncertainty of the *Christians*' Faith is no less; when they assert, that there are two Persons in the Godhead, co-ëqual and co-ëternal with the Father; from whom they received their Existence. For, if they mean by this, that there are three conscious Beings co-ëqual and co-ëternal; they must necessarily mean three *Gods*: and, if they mean one Supreme God, under three different Characters; they must allow, that the

<sup>c</sup> Lett. I. p. 32. 124.<sup>d</sup> *Athanasian Creed*.<sup>e</sup> See *Cudworth*, p. 614.<sup>z</sup> *Beveridge*.<sup>c</sup> See Lett. I. p. 119. Note xx.<sup>f</sup> *Blackstone's Comment.* Vol. IV. p. 49. 50. Letter I. p. 32.



one Supreme God did suffer Pain and Death; which is the Heresy of the *Patipassians*:—and, if they mean *three* unsubstantial Characters, or modes of Existence; then they must hold, that it was a Character only, and not a real substantial Being, that suffered for Mankind; and there can be no medium between a real Substance, and an unsubstantial Character or mode of Existence; and therefore, to speak as some do, of a Character *WHO*—has no Meaning in it; and is no Language. In short, the plane Doctrine of the *Unity*, viz. that God is One, and One only<sup>g</sup>, which ought to be the first Article in every *Christian* Church; has never been maintain'd in any one of them, without some reservation or explanation; that has rendered it as doubtful, as if it had never been asserted.

The decrees of the Councils, upon these and such like questions, carried by a majority of votes, amidst riot and confusion; gave rise to those *mysteries*, which Sir *Paul Ricaut* mentions; when, speaking of the *Greeks* and *Turks* in the *Morea*, he owns; that, “if Education were the sole motive and principle, *Turcism* would sooner take root than *Christianity*; having opportunity equal, and in easiness of things naturally to be believed the advantage before the *mysterious* doctrines of our Faith<sup>h</sup>.” Again, he says; “the *Turks* do not decimate the *Christian* Children, as they used; because so many of them turn *Mahometans*: and of other parts and nations such numbers flock daily to the profession of *Turcism*; that there is no need of this unnatural addition, to increase the power and kingdom of the *Turk*<sup>i</sup>. And to what can this be owen; but to the Corruptions which were introduced into the *Christian* Church, by apostatizing from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men!” It is urged also as another Reason, why *Mahometism* has been preferred to *Christianity*; that the Doctrines of the latter are of a more Spiritual nature, requiring greater Purity in our Practice; but this argument can be of little or no force, when the *Christian* Doctrines of Absolutions and Indulgences are taken into the question. But I shall not anticipate here any farther what will be more fully considered in an other Work.

It is certain Fact; that, while the *Christians* were employed in persecuting one another, because they could not agree in their inquiries into the metaphysical nature of Almighty God; and the

<sup>g</sup> See the Definition of *Maimonides*, in Letter I. p. 123.

<sup>h</sup> *Greek and Armenian Churches*, p. 15.

<sup>i</sup> *Ibid.* p. 22.



folution of the above Difficulties, and many others of their own invention, which had filled the Church with unintelligible and contradictory notions; the *Mahometans*, by preaching-up the plane Doctrine of the *Unity*, as it was reveled by *Moses*; [that God is One, and One only;] drew over, merely by the force of this one plane Truth, almost all *Asia* and *Africa* to the profession of their Religion.

I know, says the Author of *Reflexions on Mahometism*; that it is commonly said, the Religion of *Mahomet* was established by force of Arms; and doing violence to people's Consciences. But this violence was not such, as is commonly represented<sup>k</sup>; and was not used, for the first twelve years; nor till after persuasion had gained him a strong party to support his pretensions. Till that time he had propagated his Religion by fair means; so that the whole Success of his enterprise, before his flight to *Medina*, must be attributed, as Mr. *Sale* observes, to Persuasion; and not to Compulsion<sup>l</sup>: agreeably to what he declares in the *Koran*, *Let there be no violence in Religion*<sup>m</sup>; though he afterwards practised it, following the exemple of the *Christians*; who used the same method to propagate, not only the *homöousian* Doctrine; but also the genuine Apostolic Faith, which is generally misrepresented under the name of *Arianism*; though held in the Church long before *Arius* was born.—Besides, we find; that some *Tartarian* Princes, instructed first by the *Armenians*, and afterwards by the Monks, embraced the *Christian* Religion; but in a very little time rejected it, and became *Mahometans*. And the King of *Macassar* in the great *Celebe* Island, being instructed by the Monks and Doctors of the *Mahometan* Law, preferred *Mahometism* to the *Romish* Religion<sup>n</sup>. And, in 1246, Pope *Innocent IV* sent an Embassy to *Bati*, Cham of *Tartary*; inviting him to the *Christian* Religion; but when the Cham heard the chief points of the *Christian* Faith, the Trinity, Incarnation, Transubstantiation, &c; he thanked the Pope for his kindness, and promised to make no incursion into the *Christian* Countries for five years; but withall declared himself not well satisfied with *Christianity*, as it was represented to him: and immediately after, the *Saracens* sent a like Embassage to *Bati*; recommending to him *Mahometism*, as the more plausible Sect; and these prevailed: *Bati*, and the whole nation of the *Tartars*, submit-

<sup>k</sup> Four Treatises, p. 170.

<sup>n</sup> Four Treatises, p. 169.

<sup>l</sup> *Sale's Koran*, 48. 49.

<sup>m</sup> *Ibid.* ch. 2. p. 31.



ting to *Mahometism*; in which they continue to this day°. And Mr. *Morgan*, in his history of *Barbary*, makes the same observation with regard to the *Africans*; that they were not reduced from *Paganism*, by mere force of Arms; but because they liked the measures taken by the *Saracens* to make them relinquish their Idolatry, better than any Arguments the *Christians* could invent<sup>p</sup>: and there can be no wonder at this; when we consider, that the *Christians* were guilty of Idolatry themselves. “I will not here question, says Mr. *Mede*, whether the *Christian* or *Mahometan* be the greater Idolater; though the doubt might soon be resolved: seeing it is well known, that the *Mahometans* worship no Images<sup>q</sup>.” The *Saracens*, says the same learned Author, who spoiled and subdued so great a part of *Christ’s* Church; were never heard of, till six hundred years after *Christ*: even at the time when *Christians* began generally to fall to Idolatry, and to worship Images, Saints, and Angels. Then God first gave Us over to serve other Nations; when We began to serve other Gods, besides the Lord our God. And the *Turkish* Fury could never be stayed from casting more and more this bondage upon our necks; till the Reformed Churches began to put away their Idols<sup>r</sup>.”

II. An other reason, why *Christianity* hath been lost in several Parts of the World, where it was once received; and not received in others, where it was preached; is the Wickedness of the *Christians*, and their continual Animosities and Persecutions<sup>s</sup>. *Eusebius*, speaking of the times of *Dioclesian*, says; “When the Pastors of our Church, setting aside the Laws and Rules of their Religion, minded only quarrelling with each other; which produced nothing but reproches, threats, emulations, hatred, and separations; while each most eagerly contended for Rule and Præeminence; then, according to the saying of *Jeremiah*, “the Lord in his displeasure darkened the daughter of *Zion*: and cast down from Heaven the Glory of *Israel*—by the Subversion of the Churches.” And so in *Africa* we are told by good Authority, that the *Christians* owed their ruin to themselves; and what made the *African Moors* so passive, and ready to fall-in with the *Mahometans*, was “the hope of ridding themselves of their greatest eyefore; the imperious, impiously vicious, insatiably avaritious, and consequently insufferably tyrannical

• Unit. Tracts, vol. H. p. 19.

<sup>p</sup> *Morgan’s Hist. of Barbary*, p. 146, 159, 166.

<sup>q</sup> *Jos. Mede’s Works*, p. 795.

<sup>r</sup> *Ibid.* 194.

<sup>s</sup> Letter I. p. 7, &c.

<sup>t</sup> *Sir Is. Newton on the Proph.* p. 387.

*Christians.*”



*Christians*." And even with regard to Persecution for Conscience-sake, the same scene of Abomination, which was begun in *Asia*, was acted over in *Africa*; with the same Success. The Authority of persecuting to Blood; was procured from the Emperor *Honorius*; by four Bishops sent from *Carthage* to that purpose, A. C. 410; and his Edicts comprehended all Dissenters, who departed ever so little, *vel levi argumento*, from the established Faith. Thus the *Christians* murdered one another; for difference of Opinion; and were severely punished for all their abominations, by the just Judgement of God.

*Eusebius* considers the Persecution under *Dioctlesian*, in that light. *Socrates*, speaking of the first Persecution of the *Novatians* at *Rome* by Pope *Innocent*, observes; that at the same instant the *Goths* invaded *Italy*, and became the Lords of all. And, about seventeen years after the Bishops of *Carthage* had procured the persecuting Edict from *Honorius*, the country was invaded by the *Vandals* under *Genseric*; where the *Christians* had more than 700 Bishopricks; and above five millions of Men were destroyed: so that *Procopius* observes, it was next to a Miracle to see a Man. And afterwards, when the *Saracens* became the masters of *Africa*, they asserted the same power over the Consciences of the *Christians*, which the *Christians* with no more right or justice had exercised before over one another; and those who would not immediately become *Mahometans*, were either killed or banished. And indeed, with what appearance of Reason could it be expected; that the just Judgements of God should fall upon the *Heathens*, for persecuting the *Christians*; and yet that the *Christians* should escape them, when they murdered one another? When any thing happened unfortunately at *Rome*, in the days of *Nero*; &c. the immediate cry was, to burn the *Christians*: and did not the *Christians* act upon the very same Principle, when *Nestorius* declared to the Emperor *Theodosius*; clear me the Earth of Hereticks; and I will in return give you the Kingdom of Heaven; assist Me to destroy the Hereticks; and I will assist You to destroy the *Persians*? and what was the Consequence of this diabolical Practise afterwards, in the days of *Justinian*; but the desolation of whole Pro-

*Morgan*, as above. Sir *Isaac Newton*, p. 298. *Taylor's* Lib. of Proph. Ded. 25.



vinces? Thus the Sceptre of *Christ* was proved to be a Sceptre of Righteousness under the *Christian* dispensation; as it had been in former ages, when he destroyed our Church and Nation. For though in his Love and his Pity he redeemed them; yet, when they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, he turned to be their Enemy; and fought against them. These were the natural Effects of that Apostasy from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men; which still continues, more or less, in all the *Christian* Churches; and God Almighty hath justly plagued them with their own inventions, as he did our Fathers. And, as these things have arisen entirely from the *Christians* themselves; in opposition to the Precepts, and the very Nature of the Gospel; it could never be expected, that the Blessing of God should attend either the Men, or the Doctrines which they taught; any farther than it has done. Their Ruin was the Consequence of their Apostasy. And, if what the Bishop of Gloucester has advanced, be admitted as a Truth by the Governors of the *Christian* Churches; that the true End, for which Religion is established, is not to provide for Truth, but for civil Utility; it is not likely, that *Christianity* will make any farther progress soon; but rather be more corrupted, than it now is; and especially, if once the Governors of the Church shall take upon them to define Heresy more strictly; and the Officers of the Church shall have power to censure Hereticks, though not extirpate; which Sir William Blackstone seems to imagine necessary for the Support of a national Religion. For though these Officers may not begin their Censures with Extirpation; yet, as surely as ever the Practice of defining Heresy, and censuring Hereticks, is revived; so surely the Politicians will drive the nail that will go; and use the civil Arm, in support of their own Decrees; let them be ever so absurd, or ever so subversive of the true *Christian* Doctrines: and nothing better can be expected to be the Consequence of defining Heresies by civil Utility, without regard to *Christianity* and Truth; than the establishment of the Doctrines of Men, in opposition to the Word of God. And yet, notwithstanding all this, when we consider that the present state of things, and a much worse than the present, hath been long ago foretold; and is expected both by Protestants and

<sup>a</sup> See Letter II. p. 41.

<sup>b</sup> *I.* lxiii. 9, 10.

<sup>c</sup> *Alliance*, p. 254.

<sup>d</sup> See his IVth Vol. Papists;



Papists; the small Extent of genuine *Christianity* at present, and the small Progress it has made in the World, under the arbitrary decrees of Synods and Councils; or is likely to make under such Establishments, as do not provide for the Truth, but merely for *civil* Utility; can by no means be looked-upon by an Adversary, who is not a mere Bigot to *Deism*, as any real and substantial Objection to *Christianity* itself.

I have now completed what I designed to lay before you, as my Apology for embracing *Christianity*; by shewing it to be a Revelation consistent with the Nature of God to give, and with that of Man to receive; and agreeable to the Revelation given to our Fathers. And from the whole there seems to arise one plane, rational, consistent, and benevolent System of God's moral Government over the affairs of Men, carried-on from the beginning to the end, by the ministration of the Angel of the Covenant; who led our Fathers through the Wilderness—But it still remains to be examined; whether this System of Religion be the *true* one. For the Deists will urge; that *natural* Religion is a rational, consistent, and benevolent System, as well as *Christianity*; and not subject to so many Difficulties: in which assertion they must be allowed to speak the Truth. For *Christianity* must, in the very Nature of it, be subject to the greater number of Difficulties; because it extends our view to many more particulars in the divine Government, which it is our interest to be acquainted with; and many intricacies in Providence, which it only explains in part: in which case it is natural for the solution of one Difficulty to introduce an other, or sometimes several others. We must not therefore be affrighted from our Faith, merely upon account of the Difficulties we find in it; unless they be of such a nature, as to appear Falsities or Absurdities: for such as arise merely from our Ignorance must be found in all

\* Suarez Def. Fid. Cath. l. v. c. 21. Non est incredibile, Roman. prope Antichristi tempora ita afflicta, ut quasi in Angulo, vel in Cavernis Terræ delitescat. See Rhem. Annot. on Thess. ii. 2. lect. 6. And some learned Protestants have concluded from the Prophecies; "that the face of Protestantism will become once more covered with as foul a Corruption, as was ever that of Popery; before the happy Liberty and Light of the Gospel shall take place." "God Almighty having ever used to usher-in any great Exaltation of his Saints with some desperate Extremity and Calamity immediately foregoing it": And it seems by the Prophecies, that the witnesses or preachers of the true Faith, shall be to all appearance entirely overcome and put to silence; before the Kingdoms of this World become the Kingdoms of Christ. See Rev. xi. 7. &c. Cudworth, p. 601. 980. and a quotation from him, in Letter IV. p. 205. Sir Isaac Newton on the Proph. 250.



Systems; wherever our Knowledge of things is bounded, and we can see no farther.

If any one therefore would convert me to *Atheism*; he must not attempt to do it merely by pointing out the Difficulties, in considering the nature of Eternity, and Space, and Creation, and the origin of Evil, &c; but he must give me a Solution of all the appearances I observe in Nature, less liable to objection than *Theism*: he must shew me, that the material, vegetable, and animal Creation, and the Intelligence of Man, and the Government of the whole, are to be accounted for more fully, and philosophically upon the *hypothesis* of no Cause at all, but Chance or Nature, which are *nonentities*; than from the Superintendence of an intelligent and all-powerful Creator. But this he is not able to do: and therefore I discard *Atheism*.

In like manner, if any one would convert me to *Deism*; he must not only point out the Difficulties, which attend my present notion; but he must account for the Existence of *Judaism* and *Christianity*, and the Accomplishment of the Prophecies, and many other things which will come into the question; upon such principles, as are less liable to objection, than what I now maintain: and shew them to be more fully accounted for, *without* the supposition of a Revelation; than *with* it. But he is not able to do this: and therefore I discard *Deism*.

But it may be worth while to be more particular; and I must therefore observe, that we have Books; which contain the Civil and Religious Laws of a great Nation, by which they were governed from the earliest ages; and which have been looked upon to be authentic, to the present times; dispersed through all the learned Nations in the World, translated into different Languages, made the particular Study of the Learned for many Centuries, testified of by the Writers of every age, from the days of the Apostles; whilst they continued to be a great and powerful Nation: and we have Prophecies in these books, from before the days of *Moses*; others, from the time of the *Jewish* Kings; which we find confirmed by the most ancient Heathen Writers of different Nations, to have been punctually fulfilled long time after they were given: and other Prophecies of *Christ* and his Apostles; some of all which, both *Jewish* and *Christian*, reach to the present Times: and we see and know them.



them to be accomplished, and the present state of the World manifestly tending to the accomplishment of the rest. All these things must be accounted for by the *Deist*; as well as the *Christian*. And the question will be; when their different Theories come to be impartially examined, whether is the more probable.

If the *Deist* denies the Authenticity of the books; he must give his reasons, *why*; and upon what grounds; and account for the several quotations from them, and references to them, in other books in all ages, from the Apostles to the present times. Or rather he must deny the Authenticity of them all; for there is no book so well attested, as the Scriptures: but this would certainly be a more improbable Tenet; than any thing that is advanced, either by the *Jews* or *Christians*, in favour of a Revelation. On the other side, if he allows the books to be of the Antiquity they pretend; and yet holds the Prophecies in them to be the Inventions of Men; he must then maintain, that the Impostors in the days of *Moses*, and afterwards in the days of *Christ*, were able to foretell, merely by human Conjecture, the future affairs of the *Jews* and *Christians*; the one for above 3000, the other for more than 1700 years: which is absolutely incredible.

A Man, that would undertake to account for these things upon such principles; would find his Theory liable to much greater Objections, than any that attend the belief of a Revelation. And yet nothing is more common, than to meet with men; who being somehow or other disgusted with *Christianity*, think it sufficient to object against it at random; without considering, that the objections they make, oblige them frequently to submit to much greater difficulties than they object to; and, in order to avoid *Christianity*, to lay themselves open sometimes even to *Atheism* itself. The Reason of this Indignation against Religion in general, is thus very honestly given by Mr. *Wollaston*—Among other Prejudices, there is one of a particular nature; which we must observe to have been one of the greatest Causes of modern Irreligion. Whil'st some Opinions and Rites are carried to such an immoderate Highth; as exposes the Absurdity of them to the view of almost every body, but them who receive them; not only Gentlemen of the *belles Lettres*, but even men of common Sense many times see through them: and then out of indignation and excessive Renitence, not separating



separating what is *true* from that which is *false*, they come to deny both; and fall into the contrary extreme, a Contempt of all Religion in general<sup>a</sup>.

Another Writer, in a book dedicated to the late Lord *Lyttelton*, speaks to the same purpose. "Though the articles of religious Belief, that fall within the comprehension of mankind, and seem essential to their Happiness, are few and simple; yet ingenious men have contrived to erect them into a most tremendous System of metaphysical Subtlety. The bad consequences of such Systems have been various—Most men are bred-up in a belief of the peculiar and distinguishing opinions of some one religious sect or other. They are taught; that all these are founded equally on divine Authority, or the clearest deductions of Reason. By which means, all their Religion hangs so much together; that one part cannot be shaken, without endangering the whole. But, whenever any Freedom of Enquiry is allowed, the Folly of some of these opinions, and the uncertain Foundation of others, cannot be concealed; and, when this comes to be the case, a general Distrust of the whole commonly succeeds; with that Lukewarmness in Religion, which is its necessary Consequence". Bp. *Burnet* makes the same Observation in his Letters.

These are the Reasons, why *Deism* so universally prevales among men of Sense in *France*. It is, because their Divines have explained the doctrines of *Christianity* in such a manner; as to contradict their notions of natural Religion, which they can demonstrate; and they reject the whole, rather than admit as a divine Revelation what they know to be false, and perhaps blasphemous.

Another Reason, which leads to the same end, is; because they find themselves so oppressed, and enslaved, and tyrannized over, by their Ecclesiasticks. Whereas, if *Christianity* was so explained, as to be consistent with the natural notions of Morality, and the attributes of God; and the ecclesiastical powers so restrained, as they are in *England*; all this excessive Renitence would subside; and the Men of Literature would be as ready to attend the proofs of the Divinity of the new Testament, as of the Authenticity of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, or *Cicero's Orations*.

<sup>a</sup> *Wollaston's Rel. of Nat. Del. sect. 3. Art. 16. Obj. 8.*

<sup>c</sup> *Comparative view of Men and Animals; 213, 214.*



.. In the mean time, this excessive renitence; and contempt of all Religion upon this account; in men who profess to think freely, is most unbecoming the character of Philosophers and Scholars: whose proper business it is, in Religion, as well as in every part of Science, to separate Truth from Error; and not to give-up both together, because there is some Difficulty in the Operation. Besides, the Difficulty they fear, is chiefly imaginary; for, if they would but give themselves the trouble to examine without prejudice into the new Testament itself, they would find; that, with regard to most of the Doctrines which they start at, it is as hard a task to prove them to be the Doctrines of the new Testament; as it would be to defend them, if they were found there.—But it is easier to cut the *Gordian Knot*, than to untie it; and totally to give over all Examination, than to enquire into the Merits of the cause. However, a Man that does this, is neither to be called a Deist, nor a Free-thinker; but merely an idle and a thoughtless man: of which kind there are many thousands in this Country, who mistake themselves for *Deists*.

It may perhaps be asked; what Encouragement have men to part with their prejudices, and lay themselves open to a free and impartial Enquiry into these matters; when they find, that the more they believe, the more they are enslaved? To which it may be justly answered; that their Fears are contrary to Fact: for we find in *England*, and all those countries where any free enquiry has been made into Religion; that the people are less enslaved, and yet the Religion more firmly believed by men of Sense and Learning. And as a farther encouragement to a fair examination of these Subjects, it is well known; that *Christianity* has, by a free enquiry, been already cleared of many monstrous Errors; with which it was loaded in the days of Ignorance and Superstition; and is every day found to be more consistent with the Understanding, as well as the natural Liberties of Mankind.

The case was once the same with *Philosophy*; as it is now with *Religion*. The Earth's motion, the plurality of Worlds, and many other notions were looked-upon to be *Heretical*; as Sir *Isaac Newton's* Principles are now supposed to be in Popish Countries. But, when a fair examination was encouraged, Problems, that appeared of insuperable Difficulty in one age, were resolved in an other;



other; and in a third, in a manner despised as too simple and easy; and the same has been the case already in some points of Theology. The chief mistakes in *Philosophy* arose from their Impatience in forming Theories, without consulting *Nature*; and the chief mistakes in *Christianity*, from forming Theories, without consulting *Scripture*. From whence it followed; that the Doctrines to be maintained being often false, could only be defended by *Posulata* equally indefensible; and thus Errors increased, and succeeding Ages mistaking them for Truth, because they were established, no one had the Courage to examine into them, whether they were agreeable to the *Scripture* or not; or, if they did, it was dangerous to mention their discoveries.

And should not men of Learning and Candour allow for these oversights in *Christianity*, as well as in *Philosophy*; and endeavour to get clear of their Errors, by the same Study and Application; and by recurring to the original *Scripture*; as the Philosophers recurred to *Nature*? They have certainly the same encouraging prospect of Success; and, as the affair of Religion is of much the greatest importance, they are inexcusable if they neglect it; especially, as they must thereby deprive themselves, merely through carelessness and prejudice, of the most agreeable and important part of Literature. For nothing seems to be an Entertainment more adapted to the nature of Man, than an enlarged contemplation of the divine Wisdom in the Government of the World; and a discovery of the secret and amazing Steps of Providence from the beginning to the End of Time.

But some Gentlemen, especially those who have conversed much with the *Romanists*, will tell us; (and some few perhaps believe it;) that it is to no purpose, to use our Reason upon Religious subjects: because the Reason of man is so imperfect, and confined within such narrow bounds. But why then are they afraid, that it should pass those bounds? And, if this cannot be done; why should they not examine, where those bounds are fixed; and in the mean time use their Understanding, as far as it will go; and try all things—first, whether they are revealed or not; and then, in what sense they are to be understood. And, if the question be above their Capacities,

<sup>†</sup> *Maclaurin.*

and



and they are not able to find out the true sense of it; they may be sure, that the true sense is not revealed to *them*, nor of any importance to *their* Salvation, nor an Article of *their* Faith. For a Revelation, that leaves us as ignorant as it found us, is to *us* no Revelation at all.

But we are told, that some articles of Faith are to be viewed at a distance; and looked-upon with silent Veneration, and religious Awe; and an examination into them by Reason is dangerous, because they are *above* our Reason.—Do *Christ* and his Apostles tell us this? No; but the *Romanists* do: for Transubstantiation can be believed by no other means; and they would persuade the Protestants, if they could, that they have *credenda* in the Protestant Church; which are as contrary to the Sense and Reason of Mankind, as Transubstantiation. And some, who mistake themselves for *Deists*, take it upon their Words; and, in consequence of it, deny all Revelation in the Gross.

But let us examine, where this Danger lies; and let us choose a question, in which the *Deist* is as much concerned as the *Christian*; viz. how the material World could be brought into being, when as yet it was not: or in what manner Creation is performed. This question must be allowed by all men to be *above* our Reason; and yet we apply to our Reason for a Solution of it; but our Reason informs us, that we might as well have apply'd to a brick Wall; that, if we wanted her assistance, we should have given her some *data* to argue from; but that here she can find none; and therefore is not able to move a step forward. And this will be the case, in all other questions which are *above* our Reason; whether they relate to Nature or Revelation. And, consequently, the Danger of our reasoning, in such cases, is merely imaginary; except we reason like Fools, and draw conclusions which will not follow from the Premises: and this we may do, in matters that are *level* to the understanding; as well as in those that are *above* it.

On the other hand, it seems to be absolutely necessary for us to examine, with regard to every subject of Importance; whether it be *above* our Reason, or not: for otherwise, we may lose the Knowledge of many important Truths; merely by our Neglect. We may instance in the question of Transubstantiation; this is looked-upon by the *Romanists* as the greatest of all Mysteries; and yet we find,

Y

upon



upon examination, that it is contrary to Sense and Reason; and consequently *false*. For the very proof that it is contrary to Sense and Reason, which is called *Reductio ad absurdum*, proves the falsity of a proposition as effectually in Religious matters, as in the Mathematicks: and the credibility of *Christianity* itself depends upon this kind of argument. For, if we could believe what is contrary to Sense and Reason; it would be impossible to prove the Truth of it.

However, we are told, in answer to this; that the *Protestants* have their mysteries, as well as the *Papists*. 'Tis true: and so have the *Deists*; in the *true Scripture* sense of the Word *Mystery*. But why is not a *Mystery* to be examined into; as well as any other Proposition? Or how can a *Mystery* be true, that is contrary to Sense and Reason; any more than any other Proposition? It is amazingly weak and thoughtless in *Protestants*, to talk of the Mysteries of *Christianity* in this manner; as if they were *credenda* contrary to Sense and Reason, or not to be reconciled to them. *Christianity* has no such Mysteries: when the *Deists* speak of *Christianity* in this manner, they mean to inculcate, that our *Faith* is *Nonsense*: and when the *Papists* use this argument to convert the *Protestants*, it is merely to bring them over to the *belief* of *Nonsense*.

It is high time for the *Protestants* to understand this Word *Mystery*, which has been of such infinite Service to *Rome*, in the same sense in which it is explained and used in Scripture. A *Mystery*, in the *Popish* Sense of the Word, is a Proposition inexplicable, contrary to Sense and Reason, and as incomprehensible after Revelation as it was before: and in this sense it is, in which the *English*, when they return from travelling through *Popish* Countries, generally understand it; and apply it, when they come home, to the Religion of *Protestants*: and this is an other reason of their Disgust against *Christianity* in general. But this sense of the Word *Mystery* is so far from the true one; that it will not agree with any one Text in the new Testament.

For your Satisfaction upon this Subject, which is of great Importance, I shall examine every Text we find there; in which the word *Mystery* is used.

*Christ* tells his Disciples; to You it is given to know the *Mystery* of the Kingdom of God: and accordingly he explains to them the parable of the Sower. (*Mar.* iv. 11. *Lu.* viii. 10. *Matt.* xiii. 11.)—



St. Paul says to the *Romans*; I would not, Brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this *Mystery*; viz. that Blindness had happen'd to *Israel* in part, till the fullness of the *Gentiles* be come-in. (*Ro. xi. 25.*)—And to the *Corinthians* he says; I shew you a *Mystery*, we shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed. (*1 Cor. xv. 51.*)—And we are told, (*Eph. i. 9, 10.*) that God hath made known to us the *Mystery* of his Will; viz. that he will gather together in one, all things in *Christ*; as it is explained in the next verse.—And so the *Mystery* is explained, [*Eph. iii. 3.*] that the *Gentiles* should be joint Heirs with the *Jews*; and St. Paul explains the *Mystery* which he speaks of; (*Eph. v. 19.*)—We see from hence; that every particular of the *Christian Doctrine*, which was not known before, is called a *Mystery*; and the whole Revelation, when taken together, is called by the same name. The Gospel is therefore said to be the Wisdom of God in a *Mystery*; (*1 Cor. ii. 7.*) and the partaking of it, the fellowship of the *Mystery*; (*Eph. iii. 9.*) and it was the knowledge of this *Mystery*, which was made known to St. Paul; (*Eph. iii. 3.*) which the *Ephesians* were to understand, (verse 4.) and which he was to make known: (*Eph. vi. 19.*)—Hence we see; that the *Mystery* of the Gospel was the Doctrine of the Gospel: a Doctrine, that was preached; and a *Mystery*, that was made manifest, and explained. (*Col. i. 26, 27. iv. 3.*)—And this was the *Mystery* of *Christ*, (*Eph. i. 4.*) and the *Mystery* of Faith, (*1 Tim. iii. 9.*) and the *Mystery* of Godliness, (*1 Tim. i. 16*) and the *Mysteries*, of which the Apostles were Stewards; (*1 Cor. iv. 1.*)—And the same word is used of things not yet explained, but to be explained immediately; as the *Mystery* of the Seven Stars, (*Rev. i. 20.*) or, of what is to be explained hereafter; as the *Mystery* of Iniquity, which then began to work. (*1 Thess. ii. 7.*)—And the *Mystery* of God which is to be finished, is the method of his Government. (*Rev. x. 7.*)—And St. Paul speaks of understanding all *Mysteries*, (*1 Cor. xiii. 2.*) and declares his desire for the *Colossians*, &c. that they may have full assurance of *Understanding*, to the acknowledgement of the *Mysteries* of God: (*Col. ii. 2.*) so that the *Mysteries* he preached were to be acknowledged by the *Understanding*;—and he that spake in an unknown Tongue is said to speak *Mysteries*; merely for want of an Interpreter (*1 Cor. xiv. 2.*)

From all which it appears; that the word *Mystery* in the new Testament, means nothing more than a *Secret*; or a thing not understood.



derstood. And in the same manner, as the word *Secret* is still made use of, after it is divulged; (as when we say, the *Secret* is well known;) so the word *Mystery* is used to signify the Doctrines of the Gospel, even after they had been publicly taught and explained: and, consequently, if we must not search into *Mysteries*, we must not endeavour to understand the Gospel.

And then, to what purpose was the Revelation made? The only place in the new Testament, where it can be understood to mean an unintelligible Doctrine, is in the *Revelation* (xvii. 15.) where we are told, that upon the forehead of the Woman who sat upon the scarlet-coloured Beast full of names of Blasphemy, was written *Mystery, Babylon*, the mother of Harlots, and abominations of the Earth; a proper Ornament enough for *Her*, but very inconsistent with the Faith of a *Protestant Church*. Upon the whole, there is not a single Text in the new Testament; which even intimates to us, that a *Mystery* is an improper subject for Examination; or above our Comprehension.

The Religion of *Protestants*, on the contrary, is founded upon plane and intelligible Principles; and adapted to the Understanding of all men, as far as the *Belief* of it is necessary to their Salvation. And to imagine it a requisite in any one to believe the obscure parts of it more explicitly, than they are explicitly revealed and clearly explained in Scripture; is as absurd, as it is to suppose that no man can have a saving Faith in God, and believe that he is, and that he created the World, and governs it; without an explicit notion of necessary existence and Creation, and the origin of Evil, and laws of the Planetary System.

It is the pretending to know more of *Christianity*, than God has revealed; and to expune *authoritatively*, what the Scripture has not given us sufficient *data* to understand with certainty and precision; that has caused all the Errors and Animosities in the *Christian Church*: whereas, if men would be content to be ignorant; where they really are so, and God intended that they should be so; there would be more *Christianity* in the World, as Dr. *Whichcote* has observed; and less Controversy.

As the Doctrines of *Christianity* are all of them intelligible to every individual; as far as is necessary to be believed by every individual, in order to his Salvation: so are the Arguments, by which the Credi-

§ See the Motto to Letter VI.



bility of the Revelation is to be proved, plane and intelligible to a very low capacity. And these I shall procede to lay before you, as clearly as I can, in the following Propositions.

1. When a Being, infinitely happy in himself, crëates a number of moral Agents, from whom he can receive no Benefit; there can be no other Reason given, for such a Crëation, but his Benevolence: He does not crëate them for his *own* Happiness; but *theirs*. And as moral Perfection is necessary, not only for the Happiness of Society, but for that of every individual moral Agent; it follows, that moral Perfection must be one end for which they were crëated; and for the attaining of which he endued them with Understanding to judge of moral Obligation.

2. As the moral Perfection of men, and their mutual Happiness, depends so greatly upon right notions of the moral Perfections of God, and his Government over them by the dispensation of Rewards and Punishments, according to their Works; it is not *improbable*, that, if at any time the knowledge of his Perfections should be in danger of being utterly and universally depraved and lost in the World, he would by some means or other prevent it; and inform them, that they were *his* Creatures, and accountable to *him* for their Actions; and that he would be a Rewarder of such, as should diligently seek him.

3. If it should please God to *revel* such things to any part of Mankind; it is *probable*, that he would do it in such a manner; as would be proper to convince both his Messenger, and those to whom he should send him, that the Revelation came from *him*.

4. To convince the Messenger, that the Revelation came from him; and was not a mere Fausy, or Imagination, or idle Dream; it is *probable*, that he would assure him by some external appearance or action superior to the power of Man, which he could not be mistaking in; that he received Assistance from, and had Communication with, that Being superior to Man, in whose name he was to speak: and such exertion of Power would be called *miraculous*. The Reason why I say it is *probable* that God would take such a method to convince him; is; because I can conceive no way, by which God can prove himself superior to Man; but by the performance of some Action, or (which I include in the word *Action*) the manifesting some Knowledge, beyond the power of Man. And



5. To convince Mankind of the Divinity of the message he was to reveal to them; it is *probable*, that God would furnish the Messenger with such Credentials; as should convince those, to whom he preached, of his *divine* Mission: and would not expect, that his Messenger's word should be believed, without such Attestation. And consequently it is *probable*, that he would supply him with power to prove his Assistance from, and Communication with, that Superior Being, in whose name he spake. And this power must also be above the power of Man; i. e. *miraculous*.

6. And, if God should also design this Revelation for the use of succeeding generations; it is *probable*, that he would supply his Messenger with such *farther* Evidence of his divine Mission; as should be sufficient to convince succeeding Generations: and this might be done, by empowering him to foretell *future* Events; upon the accomplishment of which, *future* Ages would be convinced of the divine Mission of his Messenger; as well as the Generation he preached to. It is not therefore *improbable*, that he might endow his Minister with the Spirit of Prophecy.

From hence we may collect thus much; that there is nothing *improbable* in the Supposition, that God might *revel* his Will to Mankind; and, in that case, would confirm and establish his Revelation by Miracles and Prophecies. Nay farther, if it can not be shewn to be *improbable*, that God should reveal his Will to Mankind; the *Miracles* and *Prophecies* will be so far from *improbable*; that, according to our notions of Evidence and Proof, they will be absolutely *necessary* to that end. And, consequently, the whole Improbability of Miracles and Prophecy cannot possibly be greater; than the Improbability that God should reveal his Will to Man: for, if *that* be probable, Miracles will be not only probable, but necessary. So that the question regarding the Probability of Miracles and Prophecy *a priori* between the *Deist* and the *Christian*, will be reduced to this one point; Whether it is probable or improbable, that God should reveal his Will to Man; in order to prevent the knowledge of his moral Perfections and Government, and Superintendency over the affairs of Men, from being entirely obliterated and forgotten.

Having shewn it to be *probable*, that God might reveal his Will to Mankind, and confirm and establish his Revelations by Miracles  
and



and Prophecies; I shall now procede to prove the *Fact*: and, out of many Prophecies which might be chosen to argue from, I shall select *two* of the most extraordinary ones; which we know to be accomplished, and which are impossible to have been foreknown by human reason and conjecture; and highly improbable in themselves: the former of which is foretold by *Moses* and the Prophets, from above 3000 years ago; and the latter by the Apostles of *Jesus Christ*, from above 1700. Upon which I argue as follows;

1. If *Moses* and the Apostles could, and actually did, declare so long ago, what should come to pass in the future ages of the World; and this so plainly and expressly, as to be level to a common Understanding; and if we at this distance of time see, and know these Prophecies (impossible to be collected by human conjecture, and improbable in themselves;) to be actually completed: What must we conclude; but that the Prophets, who foretold these things, had their Knowledge of them from the Supreme Being, who governs all things as he pleases; or from one, who was instructed by *him* in what manner he designed that things should be, at those several distances of time<sup>a</sup>.

For my own part; when I read over the Writings of *Moses*, and the Prophets, relating to our *Dispersion*; that we shall be sifted and scattered into all Nations, and become a Proverb and a Reproche; and yet continue a *separate* People, capable of being gathered together again, even in the latter days<sup>i</sup>; whereas all the nations of the world, who spoiled us, are utterly destroyed; as our Prophets long ago foretold<sup>k</sup>: I cannot avoid concluding; that a Fact, so improbable in itself, and so contrary to what hath ever happened to any other nation in the World, could be foreknown by no one; who had not an intercourse by Inspiration with the God of the Universe: and the same Conclusion follows from the Prophecies both of the old and new Testament, which give us the particular Circumstances and Doctrines of the grand *Apostasy*, and of the rise and grandeur, and tyranny of the *Roman Church*; all which we know to have been punctually accomplished.

The prophet *Daniel* declares to *Nebuchadnezzar*, under the similitude of an Image<sup>l</sup>; that after Him should arise a Kingdom

<sup>a</sup> For this Argument see Dr. Sykes, on Miracles: the Author sometimes uses his very words.

<sup>i</sup> Deut. xxx. 3.

<sup>k</sup> Jer. xxx. 11. Amos, ix. 8.

<sup>l</sup> Dan. ii.



inferior to *his*, and a third, and a fourth; and this *fourth* Kingdom should be divided into several; some of which should be strong, and others weak; and that, during this *fourth*, a Kingdom should be erected by the God of Heaven; which should never be destroyed<sup>m</sup>.—

And in the seventh chapter he gives us the same Prophecy, under the similitude of *four* Beasts; which he explains to mean Kingdoms: (verse 17.) during the last of which, *ten* Horns or Kingdoms should arise out of it; *one* of which should arise different from the rest, which should subdue *three* of them.—

Now it is manifest, from the History of the World; that *four* great Monarchies did actually succede one another, as it is here foretold: That, in the last of these, the Kingdom of *Christ* was erected; which will last *for ever*: That, this *fourth* Kingdom has been divided into *ten*, some weak and some strong; and that from among these the Pontiffs of *Rome* are risen, different from all the other Powers; and have subdued *three* of them: *viz.* the Exarchate of *Ravenna* in 755, the Kingdom of the *Lombards* in 773, and the Dukedom of *Rome* in 796; by which means the Bishop of *Rome* acquired *Peter's* Patrimony, and became a temporal Prince, and wears a *triple Crown*. But this Power, so fatal to *Christianity*, is more particularly described by the *Christians*. *St. John* speaks of him as *Antichrist*; and at other times as a *Harlot* or apostatized Church<sup>a</sup>, having her Residence at *Rome*, sitting on the *Roman* throne<sup>o</sup>, and reigning over the Kings of the Earth, into which the *Roman* Empire was broken, who gave her their Kingdom and Power and Strength<sup>p</sup>; and as branded in the forehead with the name *Mystery, Babylon*, the mother of Harlots, and abominations of the Earth<sup>q</sup>. And the Apostle saw her (that is, the *Christian* Church) drunken with the blood of the Martyrs of *Jesus*; and when he saw her, he wondered with great admiration<sup>r</sup>: *viz.* to see the *Christian* Church drunken with the blood of *Christians*.

Now when I look into History; and find this Character, strange as it is, fulfilled in the *Roman* Church; nay, see the completion of these Prophecies before my Eyes: I can not have the least doubt, but that the Prophets, who foretold them, were instructed and inspired by God. For nothing that ever happen'd in the World can be more amazing, to us who look backward; or could have appeared

<sup>m</sup> *Dan.* ii. 44.

<sup>n</sup> *Rev.* xvii, 5.

<sup>o</sup> *ver.* 18.

<sup>p</sup> *ver.* 13.

<sup>q</sup> *ver.* 5.

<sup>r</sup> *ver.* 6.  
more



more improbable to the Apostles, when they looked forward; than what is here foretold, and has actually happened, in consequence of the Apostasy from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men, (from which no *Christian* Church in the World is yet clear;) that the *Christian* Saints and Martyrs should be persecuted by the Rulers of the *Christian* Church; and the most Religious and Learned among them, the great Patrons and Defenders of the Faith, the Sufferers and Martyrs for the Truth, should introduce into the *Christian* Church those very Errors, which the Apostles foretold in direct words to be the doctrines of the Apostasy; as the forbidding to marry, and abstaining from meats; and those Errors, which *Christ* came into the World to put an end to; such as Idolatry, and the Worship of the dead; and should not scruple to murder one another, as he had foretold, out of a notion of doing God good Service; and should raise up a Power to sit in the Temple of God, as St. *Paul* had foretold, superior to the Emperor, and all that is called God; and destructive to the Authority of *Christ* himself: and that not only the vulgar and ignorant, but the noble and learned, through all the Kingdoms into which the *Roman* Empire is divided; and all their Kings and Emperors, for many generations; and almost every individual in their Kingdoms, should patiently submit to take his yoke upon them; and to bend the knee before him—If these things can hardly be conceived to be possible, even at this time of day, though known by undeniable History; and the power of the *Roman* Pontiffs still remains; How was it possible, that the Apostles should ever think of framing such a Prophecy, without the divine Assistance?

\* It is agreed, by Protestants and Papists; that the Beast here spoken of in the Apocalypse signifies *Rome*. But the *Romanists*, with *Bossuet* Bp. of *Meaux* at their head, say; that it signifies *Rome Pagan*; and so say some *Protestants*. But the contrary will appear very clear; from the following Considerations.

1. The Beast, which St. *John* saw, was about to arise; and was not then risen: ch. xvii. 8. but *Pagan Rome* was then in its highth.

2. St. *John* was seiz'd with Astonishment; upon seeing Her (the great Whore) drunk with the blood of the Saints: and nothing could be more surprizing; if spoken of *Christian Rome*: but it could be no Surprise in *Heathen Rome*; after he had seen the Persecutions of *Nero* and *Domitian*, ch. xvii. 6.

3. Power was given to the Beast to continue 1260 years; but it does not appear, that *Pagan* Religion continued in *Rome* 400 years after the Revelation.

4. The ten Horns are ten Kingdoms; which were to receive Power with the Beast *near the end*; but nothing analagous to this ever happened in *Pagan Rome*—see Critical Notes on some passages in Scripture; ascribed to Mr. *Mann*.

Z

These



These Prophecies therefore, I conclude to be certain proofs of a Power superior to Man, assisting those who are said to have performed the Miracles recorded in the old and new Testaments: such as can leave no doubt upon an unprejudiced mind, that there must have been an intercourse between God and Man by *Prophecy*; and no conjectural Objections can be of force sufficient to be urged against such plain and positive Proof—And from hence I argue—

II. The Certainty of an intercourse between God and Man by *Prophecy*, takes-off all the Improbability from the Miracles; said to be performed by the same persons, in proof of the Revelation they were about to establish and confirm; and all Suspicion of Falshood from the Historians, who have related their actions. For he, who is certain from the completion of *Prophecy*; that the Prophets were assisted by a divine power to foretell things, which were impossible to be collected by human conjecture, and depended entirely upon the will of God; can have no reason to doubt, but that the same Being would also assist them in the *miraculous* works; which were equally necessary to promote the same end. The *Miracles* being designed to ascertain the divinity of the Revelation in the first age of its promulgation, to those that beheld them; and the *Prophecies* designed to ascertain the same Truth to such, as could not be present to see the proof by Miracles; but lived some time, perhaps some ages, after. It is therefore highly *probable*; even without the evidence of History, and prior to the consideration of it; that the same Persons, who were endowed with the power of *Prophecy*, were also endowed with the power of working *Miracles*: So that we have not only no reason to suspect the credit of the Historian who should relate such fact, any more than we have to doubt of any other action he relates; but we have a reason *a priori*, from the nature of the thing, to *believe* such persons to be endowed with *miraculous* powers; and to *expect* to meet with accounts of such facts in the Historians who undertake to relate their actions.

If it be therefore demanded; why we *believe* the Miracles of the new Testament to have been performed by those, to whom they are ascribed; it is sufficient to answer—because we know, by the completion of their Prophecies, that they were assisted by a Being able to perform them; in whose work they were employed: which will render those facts *probable*; which would be *improbable*, if related

of



of any *other* Being, not so assisted; and what would be in the general *incredible*, is in this particular case most reasonable to *expect*; and absurd to *disbelieve*. Add to this the Integrity of the Witnesses; their having no interest to serve, and their sacrificing their Lives to their Evidence; and a stronger proof will appear for these uncommon facts, than for any other occurrences that were ever attested from the beginning of the World. Hence I argue, first; that the Prophecies of *Moses* prove by *their* completion, that *Moses* had an intercourse with God; and thereby render probable the account of *his* Miracles and History: secondly, that the completion of the Prophecies of *Christ* and his Apostles, proves *their* intercourse with God; and thereby gives credit to the Evangelists: thirdly, that the completion of the Prophecies of the old Testament concerning the *Messiah*, connects the chain of evidence for the Truth of Revelation from the beginning to the present age: and, fourthly, that the present state of things which were foretold so many ages ago, agreeing with the Prophecies which were then given, is a standing Evidence; which we *know* to be *true*. And this is the foundation, upon which our *Faith* is built. So that our *Belief* is rested upon Truth, and Fact, and Certainty.

III. The Credibility of the Miracles in question, renders probable the Truth of the Doctrines they are brought to prove.

Mt. Chubb, after trifling upon this question for ten pages, in which he seems more *desirous* of raising difficulties, than *capable* of it; concludes very justly, as follows.

“ Nevertheless, I think, it must be allowed; at least, it is readily allowed by Me; that, tho’ there be no such connection betwixt *Power* and *Truth*, as that one is a necessary attendant on the other: and though *Miracles* cannot alter the Nature of things; cannot make a false Proposition true: yet, I think, when it plainly appears, that a *miraculous* Power is, or has been, exerted; the Exertion of such power calls for our most serious Attention and Regard; and, if any Doctrine has been promulged by the Operator, that Mankind are *interested* in; which Doctrine is in itself probable, as being perfectly agreeable to our natural Notions of things; then, such *miraculous* Power at least greatly strengthens or heightens that probability; as it ministers just ground for presuming, that the spring of such superior *Power*, is the spring of superior *Knowledge*.



also; when both, to appearance at least, are kindly held forth to answer the purposes of Benevolence. But, I think, we are not blindly to follow every thing, that may be recommended by *miraculous* Power: on the contrary, I think, it is our *Duty*, because our *Interest* is embarked in the case, to try every Spirit, every Doctrine, every Prophet, every Teacher; to prove all things; and hold fast that, and that only; which, upon trial, appears to be worthy the common Parent of Mankind."

I shall contradict nothing that is here advanced. It seems to be very true, that a *Miracle*; (or what we look-upon to be a *Miracle*, which is the same thing to us;) can prove nothing, except mere Power; till we know for certain, who is the Author of it: so that, when it is performed, as to all appearance, by a Man; it only proves him to be assisted by a Being superior to Man. But whether the Being who assists him be sent from God, or not; can only be proved from the nature of the Revelation he brings, or the greatness of the *Miracle*, or whatever other marks it shall please God to set upon the cause which he espouses; by which a considering person will be able to distinguish it from the cause of the Enemy, and be always sure to act with Safety.

I must own, it does not seem to Me at all necessary; that God Almighty should preserve us from mistakes; with regard to real or pretended Miracles, any more than on other occasions; without our own Care and Labour: and, if we are imposed upon, it is all one to us, whether we are deceived by a Man, an Angel, or a Devil. The question with regard to our safety in the moral Attributes of God, is not; whether He will suffer us to be deceived by one of these, rather than by an other; but whether he will suffer us to be deceived at all. Wherever he means absolutely, that a Revelation shall be known to come from *him*; he will leave us under no uncertainty about it: but, when he means, that the belief of it shall depend upon our honest researches; he will afford us no absolute demonstration: and it will become us, in that case, to search out the truth by all the powers we are masters of. And if the *Miracle*, or what appears to us to be such, be in attestation of a Doctrine which we know to be false; or contradictory to the Perfections of God, (which the *Deists* object to *Christianity*;) or contrary to a prior Revelation of his Will,

\* See Hoadly to Fleetwood; Fol. Vol. I. p. 13.

(which



(which the *Jews* object to *Christianity*;) we ought to conclude, that the *Miracle* was performed by some *bad* Being; and we should reject the *Doctrine*, notwithstanding we might be obliged to allow of the *Miracle*: for it would be a *Miracle* of a *Lie*, wrought by the power of an evil Spirit to deceive.—And accordingly we find, in fact; that it is absurd to think of convincing either *Jew* or *Deist* of the Divinity of the new Testament, by urging the evidence of *Miracles*; till the *Doctrines* established by them appear to be agreeable to Reason. If the *Miracle* be not accompanied by any *Doctrine*; it can be of no signification to us, whether it proceeds from a good or a bad Being; our Conduct will not be at all affected by it. But if a *Doctrine* should be confirmed by *Miracle*, which should inform men in an extraordinary manner of the most useful and important Truths; agreeable to the Attributes of God, and his former Revelations; we should have reason to believe, that such a Revelation came from a *good* Being; and that we ought to attend to it most seriously; and especially, if this Revelation was accompanied with the completion of a *Prophecy*; which no Being in the Universe, either good or bad, could know; except by Information from the God of the Universe. For, whatever uncertainty we may be under with regard to *Miracles* alone, whether they are wrought by a good or a bad Being; this will not be the case, with regard to the *more sure word of Prophecy*. Here we are certain, that the Revelation must come from God; for no Being can with certainty foretell, unless he is able to bring about what he foretells; or is instructed by Him, who is able to do it: and this can be no other, than the God of the Universe\*. And accordingly we find; that *Christ* himself received from Him the Revelation, which he communicated to St. *John* by his Angel†.

Now the *Doctrine*, which appears to me to be thus confirmed, and which I have therefore endeavoured to prove and explicate and recommend to the serious consideration of my Friends in the foregoing Letters, as worthy of all Acceptation; is briefly as follows.

1. That the Happiness of Mankind hereafter, will depend upon our *moral* Conduct in this World; or upon our acting according to the best of our Understanding, as to what is our Duty.
2. That the most effectual Motive to the practise of Rectitude, is the Belief that we are under the inspection of an all-perfect moral Governor; who will judge us according to our Works.

\* See *Is.* xli. 23. xlii. 9. xlii. 7, 8. xlii. 9, 10. *Jer.* xiv. 14. xxvii. 9, 10. l. 35, 36.

† *Rev.* i. 1.



3. That, to prevent the Knowledge of this Truth from being lost in the World; and a defection to Idolatry or Atheism, and an universal Depravity of manners, as the consequence; the supreme *Jehovah* did from the beginning ordain, that the *Jehovah Angel*, the same great and glorious Being, by whom He created the World, should superintend the moral Conduct of Men; and keep-up, in some part of the World, the History of God's Providence over it from the beginning; and the Prophecies of what should come to pass in future times.

4. That, to this purpose the *Jehovah Angel* made a Covenant with the *Jewish* Nation; which he took under his particular Care, because he knew that *Abraham* would command his Children after him, and they should keep the way of the Lord; and he separated it from other Nations, that they might not lose the knowledge of the true God, and fall into Idolatry; and he instructed them in the knowledge of God, and his Providence, and his Prophecies, and every thing necessary to prove to the rest of the world his Superintendence over the affairs of men, whenever they should pay a proper Attention to such subjects: and prepare them for such future Revelation, as he designed to give them in his own Time.

5. That, to carry-on this design, the *Jehovah Angel* sent his Prophets; to reclaim our Fathers, when they were running into Idolatry: who preached the Truth to them, at the risk of their Lives; in order to preserve them in the true Worship—as we are told, by way of Parable, in the twelfth chapter of St. *Mark*. “A certain man planted a Vineyard, and set a Hedge about it, and digged a place for the Wine-Fat, and built a Tower, and let it out to Husbandmen, and went into a far Country. And at the season he sent to the Husbandmen a Servant, that he might receive of the Husbandmen the fruit of the Vineyard; and they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them an other Servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent an other; and him they killed: and many others; beating some, and killing some”, &c.

6. When it was no longer necessary that the *Jewish* Peculiarity should be kept-up, the supreme God sent into the World a greater

7 Gen. xviii. 19.

8 Mar. xii.



Prophet than he had ever sent before; even that very Person, who had so long instructed the *Jewish* Nation by his Prophets: and *He* willingly undertook to descend from the Glory he enjoy'd in the presence of God, to teach and instruct a wicked World; and reconcile them to God, by declaring and demonstrating his love and regard to Them. And the same Parable goes on to tell us the Consequence of *his* Mission. "Having therefore one Son, his well-beloved, he sent *him* also unto them; saying, they will reverence my Son. But these Husbandmen said among themselves; this is the Heir, Come let us kill him; and the Inheritance shall be ours: and they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the Vineyard."

7. But though this great Prophet, this Son of God, was slain; yet he so far succeeded in his design of reforming Mankind, as to gather together into one Fold or Church many from among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; who receiv'd him as their Lord and King, and declared themselves his Subjects, and submitted to be govern'd by the Laws of his Kingdom. And the Nation of the *Jews*, by whom he was slain, was given up into the hands of the *Romans*; and their City and Temple destroyed. And on being no longer capable of preserving the Revelations of God, by reason of their disbelief of *Christianity*, the Disciples of *Christ* were commanded to turn and preach to the *Gentiles*; and those who believed succeeded into the same favour and peculiarity, which had been forfeited by the *Jews*; and have from that time to this been entrusted to preserve the sacred History and Prophecies, which are to prepare the World to receive him at his second coming, with great Power; as a Prince, and Lord over the whole Earth,

8. The Superiority of moral Perfection and Obedience to God in the *Jehovah* Angel above all other Beings, did not go unrewarded by the God of the Universe. But in reward of his Merits, he received power to raise the Dead, to forgive Sin, and to give everlasting Life to as many as he will, in that Kingdom which the invisible and self-existent *Jehovah* prepared for him before the World began; and by this means he became a Prince and a Saviour; King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; as will appear to be his proper Title, when he shall come at the end of the present *aeon* to reign over all; agreeably to the design of God, at the beginning of the World; that we should be saved by him, and he should be exalted above all Principalities



cipalities and Powers. And it was to bring about these ends, that the *Christian* Scheme was originally planned and designed by God: viz. to exercise and improve his Creatures in *Virtue*; that he might, as a righteous Judge, reward them with *Happiness*.

There is nothing in this Scheme, contrary to our Reason; nor can our Reason determine, from the nature of it, whether it be true or false; though it must be confessed, even by the Unbeliever; that it is impossible not to *wish* and *hope* that it were true.

What regard then are we to pay to this? Why, we must consider; that here is a Person from the other World, who proves his Mission by extraordinary Works, beyond the power of Man to perform; prophesied of many ages before by the professed Servants of God, who are declared to have performed miraculous works themselves, by the most authentic History; the *Doctrine* he teaches tends to promote those Virtues, which our own Reason and Conscience approves of, and informs us to be our Duty; and he assures us of an eminent *Reward*, far above any thing that this world can boast of; and the whole Scheme that is revealed is great and magnificent; worthy the nature of an immortal Being to pursue, and of the supreme God and Governor of the Universe to grant; being full of Bounty, Benevolence, and Love. And as we may be well assured, that no *bad* Being would ever so far counteract its own Nature, as to *persuade* us to the practise of Virtue; much less entice us to it, by the hopes of Glory, and Honour, and Immortality; we may safely conclude, that the Revelation must come from a *good* Being: and from the accomplishment of Prophecy we must conclude, that it comes from the *supreme* Being. So that we are in no danger of being deceived in this case to our Hurt; if we do but use our own natural Powers, and examine to the bottom of things.

“What though the *Magicians* are said to have done very extraordinary things before *Moses*; and *Simon Magus* did things, which the people did not distinguish from true Miracles; and false *Christians* may do great signs and wonders hereafter: yet, as in the two former cases, the opposers of the Truth were brought to own, that *Moses* and *Philip* both acted by a superior Power; so there is no doubt, but in the future signs and wonders of false *Christians*, the serious and rational Enquirer will be at no loss to find on which side the cause of Truth lies.”

\* Dr. Sykes. *Hoadly*, Fol. Vol. I. p. 10. 12.



For we do not believe on *Christ*, merely on account of the *Miracles* he wrought; of which there was a long series uncontroul'd, public at different times, of various sorts, commanding the Winds and Seas, and even Death itself; and after all, he received a farther Evidence from God by a Resurrection from the dead; as he himself had foretold: I say, we believe in *Christ*, not only on account of these *Miracles*; but also because he fulfilled the *Prophecies* of the ancient Prophets, taught so excellent a *Doctrine*, was so perfectly good and holy, and had a communication with God; which we are assured of by the accomplishment of his Prophecies. And therefore even greater Miracles than he performed, if they were possible, ought not to draw a rational *Christian* from his Faith; because his Faith does not depend on *Miracles* alone, but on all these considerations jointly.

We see then, on how firm a footing *Christianity* is fixed; and what abundant Evidence God has given us, for what he expects us to believe: and how little Reason there is, to fear a rational Enquiry into it; or to use the civil Arm in its defense: when a free use of the Understanding, in a fair Examination of all the Arguments for or against it, will do so much more honour to the Cause; and be so much more agreeable to the Example of its Founder.

A a

POSTSCRIPT.



POSTSCRIPT.

ON MIRACLES.

**A**S a late Writer upon *Miracles* hath attempted to overthrow their Credibility; and consequently the Belief of all Revelation, as far as it is founded on them, by arguing *a priori* from their Nature; it will be necessary for Me to consider his Arguments.

He tells us; that a *Miracle* may accurately be defined, "a Transgression of the Laws of Nature, by a particular Volition of the Deity; or, by the Interposal of some invisible Agent." Upon which I would observe; that there is not one *Miracle* mentioned in the whole Scripture, that can be proved to agree with this Definition. The Laws of *Nature*, or, in other Words, the Laws of *God*, are never said to be transgressed by a *Miracle*, in any one of the sacred Writers; nor any thing like it once intimated: but the direct contrary appears, in the account of every *Miracle*, which is particularly described; the Cause being adequate to the Effect, according to the Laws of Nature, in all of them; wherever either any material Instruments are used, or the natural and immaterial powers of spiritual Beings are exerted. Whereas, if the Effects were brought about contrary to the Laws of Nature, this would not be the case; but the Cause would at least be inadequate to the Effect, if not contrary to it. And therefore, "though constant Experience should assure us, (as Mr. *Hume* expresses it) that the Laws of Nature are firm and unalterable;" [as they certainly are:] yet there would arise from thence no proof against *Miracles*; because a *Miracle* is no Violation of them.

If a blind man was made to see, without any alteration in the organs of Sight; or a lame man was made to walk, while the Limb continued broken and unaltered; he would have, and not have, the use of the same Organs at the same Time; which is impossible: and to suppose Omnipotence itself can make these Organs perform their offices, (when by any accident they are made incapable of it,) without some alteration in them to supply their defects; is as absurd, as to suppose it done without any Power at all. For, what is Omnipotence;



potence, without an actual Exertion of Power? and where is the Exertion of Power; if every thing continues as it did before? These things therefore would be *contrary* to the Laws of Nature; because the Effect would be produced, without an adequate Cause; i. e. by a Cause incapable of producing it: and this would be the case universally of all Miracles supposed to be performed *contrary* to the Laws of Nature; they must be *Impossibilities*. But that the Eye should see, and the Limb perform its operations, after being cured of their defects; is no more *contrary* to the Laws of Nature, than the performance of their natural functions, before they were out of order. And if superior Beings are able by their natural Powers to perform such Cures as these, which it is impossible to disprove; they act as agreeably to the Laws of Nature, as we do in our common actions. It is impossible to prove; that God will not permit Beings superior to Man, on some occasions to exert their natural Powers in this World, in actions which are above the Power of man to perform: and, in such cases, the action will not only be possible, but agreeable to the Laws of Nature; and will direct us to refer the action to some Being superior to Man. And, as this is the whole that a *Christian* needs contend for, upon the subject of *Miracles*; all dispute, whether a Miracle be possible or not; and whether it be contrary or agreeable to the Laws of Nature, will be nothing more than a dispute about the definition of a Word: for revealed Religion stands in need of no other kind of Signs, or Wonders, or Miracles, to support it; than merely the Interposition of some Being superior to Man, manifested by the performance of some action agreeable to the natural Powers of that Being, and superior to the Power of Man; and it is of no signification to the cause of Revelation, whether such an action be called a *Miracle*; or not. It is certain; that all the Miracles we meet with in the Scripture, which are distinctly explained to us in their circumstances, are of this nature; and were performed by Causes adequate to their Effects. When God created this World by his Command, it was performed by the *Logos* or *Word* of God; when *Noah* was to be preserved in the Flood, he was ordered to build an Ark to save him: when a withered Hand was to receive motion from the Will of Man, it was made whole like the other: when a Blind man was made to see, the Scales which obstructed his sight were removed: in all these cases, the Effect was adequate to



the Cause; and, when we know not the method, by which any extraordinary Effect mentioned in the Scripture was brought about; we have no more reason to suppose it to be *contrary* to the Laws of Nature, than those already mentioned.

St. Peter declares; that the healing of the lame man, at the beautiful gate of the Temple, was not performed by *Him*; but by the Power of God: the People wondered at the Cure, supposing it to be done by his own Power; but He disclaimed it. This was also the case, when *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were slain; (*Acts* v.) and the Magicians who opposed *Moses*, when they saw what *he* had done was *above* the Power of Man, concluded very justly; that it was done by the finger of God. They did not, and indeed could not argue, as the *Deists* do; that it was above the power of Man to perform, and therefore was not performed: but that it was above the power of Man, and therefore was done by a power *superior* to that of Man. To suppose an action *done* by the power of Man, which is *above* the power of Man; is to suppose the Cause inadequate to the Effect; and, consequently, a contradiction to the laws of Nature: but, when such an action is performed by the finger of God, the Cause is equal to the Effect; and the laws of Nature are preserved.

Even when *Christ* himself performed his Miracles in the flesh, it does not appear, that he did *by his own hands* put in order the eyes of the blind; or perform any such action as possibly might be inconsistent, according to the laws of Nature, with the incumbrance of the human Body: but the Power, which immediately acted, was the *Holy Ghost*; and, if the Holy Ghost did perform the Miracles by his own natural Power, there was nothing in them contrary to the laws of Nature. And we are assured; that it was the *Spirit of God*, which enabled *Christ*, while on Earth, to heal Diseases, cast out Devils, raise the Dead, and work all sorts of Miracles, for confirmation of his divine Mission. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with Power; and was full of the Holy Ghost; and God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him; and he himself declares, that he cast out Devils by the Spirit of God; and says expressly, the Father which is in me, *He doth the Works*: so that, when he spat upon the ground, and made clay, and anointed the eyes of the blind; the

<sup>b</sup> *Whitby* on 1 *John* v. 6. *Mat.* xii. 28. *Luke* iv. 18. 20.

<sup>c</sup> *Acts* x. 38.

<sup>d</sup> *Luke* iv. 1.

<sup>e</sup> *Jo.* iii. 34.

<sup>f</sup> *Mat.* xii. 28.

<sup>g</sup> *Jo.* xiv. 10.

miraculous



miraculous Cure was immediately and personally performed by the same Person, who raised him from the dead; who is called the *great Power of God*; by whom the Apostles also performed *their Miracles*.

And here it may be proper to make this *general* observation; that, wherever it is imagined, that the laws of Nature are contradicted; the true state of the case is entirely mistaken: for the laws of Nature continue always the same; and, where there is any change in the effect which we observe, the change is made in the *things themselves*; that is, in the Essences or in the Properties. This is the case of Water, hardened into Ice; Wax, melted by Heat; or Gunpowder, when it is moistened: upon which alteration of their Properties, their Effects, though totally different from what they were before, will be as agreeable to the laws of Nature; as their contrary Effects were, before the change. As to the instance, mentioned by a late Writer, of Fire, which, without losing its Properties, does not burn Combustibles; I must beg leave to deny the Fact: for to suppose an adequate Cause not to produce its natural Effect, is equally absurd; as to imagine an Effect to be produced without an adequate Cause: which would not be a *Miracle*, but an *Impossibility*. God may deprive Fire of its burning quality; but then it will cease to be Fire: or he may deprive the Materials of their combustible Nature; but then they will cease to be Combustibles: or he may prevent their meeting together—but, if they continue to have the same Properties, and are brought into contact; they must and will produce their natural Effects: or, in other words, they must and will observe the Law of their Natures, which God has appointed to them. And this they will do constantly and regularly, till he shall add or subtract or change some Circumstance or some Property in them; and then they will go on according to the Properties that still remain unchanged; and the new ones that have been superinduced: and all this will be as agreeable to the laws of Nature, as it is for a Bowl running on in a strait line, and being struck by a visible or invisible Being, (it is all the same, either way) to change its direction; and continue its motion at an angle with the line it was first moving in: and to suppose the contrary to this, is to suppose they *lose* their Properties, whilst they *retain* them; and are changed, without any Alteration.

If



If it be argued, in opposition to this; that God can produce what Effect he pleases, by his own immediate Power; I answer, it is true; but then the laws of Nature are entirely out of the Question: and, the nature of created Beings not being at all concerned in the Effect, the whole must be resolved into the *divine* Power, as the adequate Cause; and then every thing possible will be accounted for, from the nature of Omnipotence. But the Question we are considering does not relate to the *immediate* Power of God; but to his making use of *Instruments*; and producing such Effects by *them*, or by *their* means, as are contrary to the Natures with which he has endowed them.

Now we know the difference of one thing from another, only by the difference of their *Properties*; (for we know the *Essence* of nothing) and we know the difference of their *Properties*, only by their Accidents and Effects; and, consequently, wherever we find a difference in these, we have reason to believe; there is an alteration in the things themselves; and it is very consistent in the Author of Nature, to make what change he pleases in the things themselves; but not to produce Effects by inadequate Causes. For, so far as the Causes are inadequate to the Effects, the Effects are produced by no Cause at all; which, if allowed to be *possible* in any one instance, may be *true* with regard to the production of the Universe; and will lead directly to Atheism. I shall give an Instance, to explain what I mean: If a Person should walk upon the Water, as he does upon the solid Ground; either there must be an alteration made, in the properties of the Water; that is, it must be changed from what it was before; (though it may continue to be called by the same name) or there must be some alteration in the properties of the human Body; or the Body must be supported: it cannot possibly be done otherwise; any more by a Miracle, than *without* one; for a Miracle must be caused by something adequate to the Effect wrought, and able to produce it; as much as if it were no Miracle. To deny this, is to make no difference between a *Miracle* and an *Impossibility*; which is all the *Deist* desires to be granted, in order to attack Revelation. In short, to imagine that Water, which at this moment is *not able* to support a Man, shall the next moment be *able* to support him; without any alteration or change, either in the Water or the Man; implies the same contradiction, as to suppose a thing to have the property of hardness, while it continues soft; of length, while it continues short;  
of



of bluntness, while it continues pointed: and to argue from the nature of Omnipotence, is nothing to the purpose. For, if there is no change made in the things themselves, but they continue just the same they were before; there is no act of Omnipotence exerted: and they will continue to observe the Laws, which God gave them at their Creation.

It is no less absurd to suppose, that God ever makes use of *improper* Instruments to perform his Will. A God of infinite Power can have no Occasion to do it; for he can give to every Thing what properties he pleases; he can *change* and alter them, as he pleases; till they become *proper* Instruments to bring about his designs: or he can accomplish his Will, by his own *immediate* power; without the use of any Instruments at all. And is it possible to conceive; that such a Being should make use of any thing, contrary to the Nature he gave it; and not rather adapt it to the end, for which he designed it to serve; or else perform his designs without it—that, in order to produce a Famine, he should send Plenty; and, to burn-up a Country, he should send Rain? or that, because he is allpowerful, he should make use of an East, rather than a West wind, to carry the locusts out of *Egypt* into the *Red* sea; [*Ex. x. 19.*] and drive them one way, by forcing them to move the contrary? And, when God has formed the human Body with all the marks of Wisdom that we can conceive, by adapting every part to its particular use; is there any Sense in asserting, that, because he is Almighty, he could have made the several parts to serve the same purposes as well as they do, if they had been formed in any other manner; if the Bones were as soft as the Flesh, if the Muscles were as hard and solid as the Bones now are, if there were no Joints, nor Veins, nor Arteries, nor Nerves? Does not such a way of talking destroy the very Idea of his Wisdom, in having formed things as they are; and betray our own Ignorance and Folly? It is Nonsense, at the best; if not Impiety.

But farther; Mr. *Hume* seems to look-upon every thing to be contrary to the Laws of Nature, which is contrary to *our* Experience. For he says; “Firm and unalterable Experience hath established the Laws of Nature.” I suppose, he means; that firm and unalterable Experience certifies to us, and assures us, that there are certain Laws of Nature. And I allow, that we have reason to conclude



conclude from Experience; that there are certain Laws of Nature. But yet firm and unalterable Experience will never assure us of any future Event, even in our experimental Philosophy; unless we are perfectly certain, that the Circumstances were the same *before*, as they are *now*; in every particular—For a very little Accident, quite unobserved, may produce an Effect contrary to what we have ever before experienced; as may be instanced in the accidental moisture of the Sand, in casting Lead; and many other cases. And, when such Accidents happen in Experiments where they are unexpected, and sometimes perhaps are not to be accounted for; a true Philosopher does not immediately cry out, this is contrary to the Laws of Nature; only because it is contrary to his Experience. If this were the case, he must look upon every thing that appears extraordinary; and indeed, every effect he had never before experienced; to be contrary to the Laws of Nature. Thus, when the King of Siam disbelieved the Dutch Embassadors's account; that in Holland the Water was so hard in cold weather, as to be walked upon; he argued, like Mr. Hume, from his Experience of the Laws of Nature; *established on firm and unalterable Principles*: he considered the Laws of his own Climate, as the Laws of Nature; and thought, there were no Laws of Nature, but what he had experienced at Siam: and, if we were to put the Word *Ice*, instead of the Word *Miracle*, into the Argument; his Majesty's Experience will prove against the existence of *Ice*, as completely as Mr. Hume's does against a Miracle. *e. g.*

“As firm and unalterable Experience has established the Laws [of Nature;] the proof against the existence of *Ice*, from the very Nature of the Fact, is as entire; as any Argument from Experience can possibly be imagined<sup>n</sup>: and, as an uniform Experience amounts to a Proof, there is a direct and full Proof from the Nature of the Fact against the existence of *Ice*!”

But we can hardly imagine Mr. Hume mean'd to build his Argument (from firm and unalterable Experience) merely upon his never having experienced a Miracle; but perhaps upon the non-experience of all ages in this respect, from the beginning of the World. But there is no such *Postulatum* to be granted. No such non-experience in Fact: we have many accounts of Miracles, in our

Hume's Essays, 180. Ibid. 181. to every man's knowledge

most



most ancient and best authenticated Histories: and, though the *Deist* does not believe these accounts; he has no right to assume it, without Proof, that they are all false. Especially, as he knows it to be a question, among learned men of the best understanding; whether *Spiritual Beings* do not sometimes interfere in human affairs, and cause *Appearances* very contrary to common *Experience*.

In short; the Argument against Miracles, which is drawn from Experience in natural Philosophy, or from the common Course of inanimate Nature; where we take it for granted, that all the circumstances relating to the event, are entirely the same; is altogether frivolous, when applied to *Miracles*: and must be so, in every other instance, where a *moral Agent* is supposed to interfere. A Ball may fall to the ground 1000, or 10000 times; but, if any one should choose to stop it in its fall, the Argument from Experience would be of no kind of service to prove that it would fall to the ground the next time it was thrown up. And the same is the case, in every miraculous Interposition. The probability of it does not at all depend upon the general Course of inanimate Nature; but upon the Will of the Agent who is supposed to interfere. The specific Gravity of the human Body will make no argument against a Person's walking upon the Water; if he be supported by an adequate Power. But more of this by and by.

I shall go on with Mr. *Hume's* Objection. If, by constant uniform Experience, he does not mean the constant uniform Experience of all Ages from the beginning of the World; but only the constant uniform Experience of men, for the last fifteen or seventeen hundred years; his assertion is very innocent, and what no consistent Protestant needs to contradict. For he does not surely expect his Reader to conclude; that, because no Miracles have happened, *since* that time; therefore no Miracles happened, either *at* that time; or *before* it. Miracles, says the *Christian*, are necessary to establish a Revelation; and no new Revelation has been, or can be, established without them; for Reasons already mentioned. About 1700 years ago, God gave a Revelation to mankind, which He established by Miracles; and Miracles have never since that time been experienced, because no new Revelation has been given.—Will the *Deist* conclude from hence, that they did not happen at the time specified; because they have never happened since? or, because God does not



often interfere visibly in the affairs of Men, therefore he *never* does; or, because, he does not interfere upon *trifling* occasions, therefore he does not interfere in affairs of the *greatest importance*; to convince men of his Being, of his Providence over the World as a moral Governer, of a Resurrection from the dead, and a future Judgement; and to put an end to Idolatry and human Sacrifices, and all the abominable Rites and Cerimonies of the Heathen Worship?

Here the *Deist* is conscious of his Weakness; and does not dare to enter into the question, as relative to the important *End* which Miracles are designed to serve: because it seems so extremely probable, that God might revele his Will to Man, upon such important Occasions; and Miracles would be necessary to give credit to a Revelation as coming from him. But he artfully avoids considering the subject in this Light; strips the question of all circumstance, relation, consequence, and connection with the Wisdom and Goodness of God, and the Benefit of Man; and then asks gravely, whether Miracles be *probable*, or not, in their own Nature: As if every act of an intelligent Being (and such are all Miracles) did not depend on Circumstances.

But, to answer Mr. *Hume* in his own way—If Miracles are, in their own nature, proper *Attestations* to the Interposition of some Being superior to Man; then there is something in their Nature, which makes it probable they will be performed; whenever it shall please God to revele his Will to Man. Miracles therefore are in their own Nature as *probable*, as it is that God will revele his Will to Man; which was never looked upon as *improbable*, even by the heathen Philosophers.

That some Being of superior Power to Man, is *able* to support a man upon the water, or cure a broken limb, or a defect of the sight immediately, is as unquestionable; as it is, that a Man has the power to stop a Ball which is thrown into the Air, from falling to the Ground by its natural Gravitation: But, whether he *will* actually do it or not, depends entirely (as I have observed) upon the Will of the Agent; and not in the least upon the nature of the Action, but upon the motives and circumstances, by which the Agent is influenced. The nature of the Action is no farther concerned, than only whether it be in the Power of the Agent to perform it. So that, if we do not consider the Will and Design of God; and Miracles, as serving



serving to promote that Will and Design ; the question, whether Miracles are in their own Nature probable or improbable, is too naked to be answered : and we may as well inquire, whether it is probable or improbable, that the *Iroquois* will send Embassadors next month to the *Cherokees*. For, as the Actions of all moral Agents depend upon Circumstances ; if you take away the Circumstances, there is no motive left for Choice : and, if you take away our Knowledge of the circumstances ; and, consequently, our knowledge of the motives ; we have no *data* left to judge by, whether they will act one way or the other. And this is the state of the question, as it is here proposed by Mr. *Hume* to be examined. — So that, though he had succeeded ever so well, in proving that Miracles are improbable ; considered in themselves, as Transgressions of the Law of Nature, by a particular Volition of the Deity ; (according to his Definition of a Miracle ;) yet his Argument would not all affect the Miracles of the old and new Testament ; which are all of them Interpositions of Providence, agreeable to the Laws of Nature ; and Attestations to a divine Revelation, calculated for the good of Mankind, in affairs of the greatest Importance. This it is, that makes the difference between the Scripture Miracles and all others ; and renders these worthy of the greatest Regard ; whilst all others, how well so ever attested, may be safely neglected : because it is not only highly improbable, but absolutely incredible ; that the supreme God and Father of the Universe should interpose in the affairs of this World, either personally or by command, in a miraculous manner ; for no reason at all, (which must be the case of Miracles, considered in themselves, and as strip'd of all circumstance and connection ;) or for a trifling one.



Books printed for J. WILKIE, N<sup>o</sup> 71, St. Paul's Church-Yard.

1. Letter the *first* of Benjamin Ben Mordetai; containing an Account and Examination of the various Opinions among Christians, concerning the *Nature and Person* of CHRIST.

Price Three Shillings and Six Pence, *sewed*.

2. Letters the *second, third, and fourth*; shewing from Scripture, that the *Logos* was the *Angel* of the *Covenant*: proving the same from the most approved Commentators on Scripture; both ancient and modern, both *Jewish* and *Christian*; and demonstrating, that Jesus was the *Messiah*.

Price Six Shillings, *sewed*.

3. Letters the *fifth, sixth, and seventh*; containing preparatory Principles to the *Christian* scheme of *Redemption*; giving the scheme of *Christianity* itself, and shewing it to be one, plane, regular, and consistent System of divine Oeconomy, from the beginning of the World to the end; and containing Proofs, Illustrations, Answers to Objections, and an Examination of Mr. Hume's Notion of Miracles.

Price Six Shillings, *sewed*.

The whole *Seven* Letters may be had, in *One Volume, Quarto, sewed in Boards*, Price Fifteen Shillings and Six Pence.

4. The Holy Bible, adapted to the Use of Schools and Private Families: containing all those Parts of the Old and New Testament, which relate to the Faith and Practice of a Christian; the whole divided into Chapters and Paragraphs, with short Notes and Observations.

By RICHARD WYNNE, A. M. Rector of St. Albans, London.

In Octavo, Price Five Shillings, bound.

